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The Definition of Insanity:
Dialectically Communicating Student Athlete Identity and Structure
in Collegiate Sport Culture

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Denver

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Marissa M. Yandall

June 2014

Advisor: Erin K. Willer, PhD

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Degree Date: June 2014

ABSTRACT

Albert Einstein famously stated that the definition of insanity is to continue to go about a process in a similar manner while expecting different results. This is the current state of collegiate athletics. Reformers and community members have high hopes for meaningful change in light of the numerous and ongoing issues of impropriety and scandal that continue to grace the sports page in daily current events. Yet, in spite of nearly one hundred years of reform efforts, the structure of collegiate sport has changed very little. How can we expect a change in the culture without making concentrated effort to change the structure? Through my dissertation project, I looked at discursive struggles within student-athlete identity and collegiate sport structure to theorize identity and structure with respect to the multiple and often competing discourses that constitute collegiate sport culture. With an eye toward envisioning structural change, I posed the following questions: 1) What are the competing discourses that animate student-athlete identity through everyday collegiate sport practices and how does their interplay constitute the meaning(s) of student-athlete identity? 2) How do the competing discourses invoke the structures within collegiate sport culture? 3) How can the interpenetration of competing discourses that construct student-athlete identity inform community members in efforts to (re)develop everyday practices?

Taking an ethnographic approach and employing relational dialectics theory (Baxter, 2011), I found structures of collegiate sport practice to complicate student-athlete identity. Specifically, the policies detailing everyday practices of collegiate sport (i.e., academic advising, tutoring, academic textbooks, study hall) claim to center the educational experience, yet the implementation of those practices in daily processes and procedures largely centered the athletic experience and de-centered the educational experience. My findings challenge present claims by the NCAA and Universities that the experience of the student-athlete are academically centered. My findings also contribute to ongoing conversations that point to the structure of collegiate sport as problematic. Specifically, findings reveal important discrepancies between policy and practice within collegiate sport structure as well as an important link between student-athlete identity and structure through everyday practices. Given the disconnection between policy and practice, the link between structure and identity has significant implications regarding the complexity of student-athlete identity. Drawing on the findings, I offer suggestions for (re)developing and (re)envisioning everyday practices and structure.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Although authored by one, it takes an *aiga* to support the completion of a dissertation program and doctoral project. With humility and gratitude, I thank the following people who were instrumental in my success:

- My parents, Sandra and Chris, who instilled in me a passion for learning and the drive to accomplish seemingly impossible tasks.
- My spouse, Jared, who has been on the rollercoaster with me through every twist and turn and has been unconditionally supportive.
- To my daughter Bodhi, for bringing much needed perspective at crucial moments throughout my dissertation process.
- My advisor, Erin K. Willer, who took on my unique path and project without hesitation. You inspire me every day through your passion and presence. You embody what mentorship should be. I am so grateful to have had the privilege of your guidance.
- My committee members, Bernadette Calafell, Kate Willink, and Jeff Kassing. Thank you for your continuous support and diversity of perspectives.
- My former advisor, Fran Dickson, who was instrumental in my early development. Thank you for continuing to be there for me.
- To the staff members I worked with during this project, for sharing your time, your wisdom, and your hopes for collegiate sport.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Narratively Communicating Investment and Tensions in Sport & Education

In my performative scholarship, I often begin with a personal moment, a narrative, or a confession. This reiterative moment in my work is a signal to myself and to the audience that I am personalizing the text. It signals that I am engaged in a reflexive project of seeing myself see myself in both the moment of the academic utterance and my aware presence of owning what I say. (Alexander, 2003, pp. 416-417)

In the spirit of Alexander, I begin by pausing to reflect on my own self-reflection of the dissertation moment. As I work at seeing myself, see myself I am able to step beyond the frustration of the moment and observe that much of my struggle is not based in the inherent difficulty of the dissertation process itself (Foss & Waters, 2007). In other words, if I look closely at my scholarly struggle, I locate the roots of my angst in love and care. I have been thoroughly committed to my vision of academic identity and making sure that this project exemplifies that vision. When I consider all of the time and effort I have put into my graduate education and shaping my scholarly identity, I realize that much of the pain and heartache I have experienced is because I care so deeply about this work and the way it communicates my values and beliefs; not only about scholarship, but how I see myself and how we, as a society, see and relate to each other as human beings.

In recognition of this moment, I begin by describing the following manuscript as a love story. As in most love stories, this one is also full of wondering, anxiety, fulfillment, frustration, heartache, and desire. The words, theories, methods, and topics of the work presented here tell the story of my graduate education and experience; my struggles to not only find my place and voice in academia, but also to find balance between my work and my life. My desire to pursue a doctoral degree and my desire to enjoy time with family, friends, and passions beyond academia have produced an ongoing site of tension for me throughout my graduate process. Additionally, I have spent the majority of the past six years bouncing around various scholarly identities, paradigms, and approaches wondering to which camp(s) I truly belong. These struggles represent a salient, and I believe, critical component of my education and experience. And so I am not surprised that this body of work, the culmination of my graduate training, reflects, embraces, and hopefully, exemplifies tension as theoretically and pragmatically productive. I have chosen to share my experiences as an introduction to this dissertation project through personal narrative.

Goodall (2004) explained narrative ethnography as “a cross-disciplinary communication project aimed at re-establishing the centrality of personal experience and identity in the social construction of knowledge” (p. 187). The centrality of personal experience refers not only to individuals and communities of study but also the voice of the researcher and the contextualization of that voice. Not all scholars who embrace this method identify as narrative ethnographers and may locate themselves as autoethnographers, new ethnographers, or performance scholars (p. 187). Goodall

shared a profound moment of realization about his scholarly voice in experiencing “an everyday emptiness that found its fullest expression in the habit of being me. This perceived emptiness was not experienced as a personal crisis. It was, in fact, the *absence* of crisis” (p. 186).

In my writing I avoided how I felt, personally about my subject matter—fellow human

beings—and ignored, or at least suppressed, my emotions. The *me* that appeared on the page had no past, nothing personal to say about himself, and revealed no desire. That person who appeared on the pages I wrote, that successful communication professional, represented himself and his prose as an unclassed, non racial, ungended, and soulless purveyor of bodiless cognitions. I was clinically aloof, dry all the way down to my calcium skeleton, but nevertheless omniscient, objective, argumentative, and supposedly rational. I had attained the rarified status of the third person singular and found myself writing as if I was proud to be so damned distanced from others. My words, my point of view could have been authored by an academic anyone. I now understood my problem. Saw it clearly. I had written *myself* out of my life. (p. 187)

This reiterative moment resonated deeply with me (Alexander, 2003). One of my biggest struggles in consuming interpersonal communication literature and attempting to find my voice within it is the overwhelming lack of personal voice and reflexivity (Foster, 2008). I wanted to know who these scholars were and how they connected to their work. While I understand and appreciate scholars who do not share my view, I am unable to ignore this value in my own scholarship. And because this is not simply *a* love story, but *my* love story, I choose to take a narrative and ethnographic approach to its telling. This dissertation represents more than an academic manuscript, it represents time and sacrifice; time away from my family, time spent tirelessly reading and revising, time agonizing over word choice, time spent obsessing over what to include and what to cut.

This manuscript represents so much more than the content it reveals. As scholars, “the interplays of work in our lives and our lives at work” influence our work, whether or not we choose to reveal “celebrate and detail the natural blurring of them” (Goodall, p. 188). In other words, who I am, and the experiences that have shaped my graduate education, *matter* in the telling of this story. Thus, narrative ethnography enables me to write myself into my story (Goodall).

Koenig Kellas, Willer, and Kranstuber (2011) discuss sense-making, identity construction, and coping as three primary benefits of narrative sense-making (p. 65). Narrative enables me to illustrate my struggle to understand my academic identity and the politics surrounding my values in my attempts to authentically shape my academic voice. This dissertation ultimately represents the story of a tumultuous and painstaking, albeit fantastically rewarding, time in my life; therefore, my ongoing processes of sense-making, identity negotiation, and coping are integral facets of this work. And although speaking of one’s position and values can be at odds with what is considered academic research, there are many scholars who value and speak to the possibilities of stories, positionality, and reflexivity in scholarship (Bochner, 1997, 2002; Calafell, 2013; Calafell & Moreman, 2009; Conquergood, 1985, 1991; Foster, 2008; Jones & Calafell, 2012; Madison, 2006). Reflexivity goes beyond personal voice to “innovatively narrating the researching selves presence in ethnography” (Berry & Clair, 2011, p. 95). This means the researcher is not simply using personal voice and experience, but reflecting on the politics and position of that voice in relation to the other voices present in the research. The choices I have made throughout my graduate experience are both

relevant and important to this work. As such, I have organized this chapter to introduce you to the academic project through the choices that brought it into being.

A Student and an Athlete

There are two passions at the heart of this project and my scholarly endeavors over the course of my Master's and Doctoral programs; education and sports. I have spent the majority of my time over the past six years figuring out how to put the two of them together so I can teach what I love and love what I teach. I will always feel indebted to Communication Studies because it has given me the liberty to put my two great passions together. I love sport. I also love learning. As I look back on my life, I can appreciate how much sport has taught me about myself and about life in general. "Sport is essentially *unnatural*, given that it is organized, enacted, and reproduced through language and other communicative practices in ways that echo and maintain particular cultural forms and their ideological underpinnings" (Mean & Halone, 2010, p. 254). In other words, sport is something that we, as a society, have brought into being. Over thousands of years, sport continues to thrive as a dominant institution, discourse, and means of social interaction; a cultural practice that can be traced to our earliest civilizations and tells an important story about who we are as a society. It may not be a story we all embrace, but it speaks to us and through us, nonetheless. Sport is not something we can choose to embrace or choose to ignore in modern society because it permeates nearly every aspect of social life. Historically, the leaders of our country have repeatedly drawn on the rhetoric of sport, positioning discourses of sport as dominant and

normative. In many countries there is an expectation that sport is central to our lives. We can observe this expectation as discourses of sport are woven into discussions of politics and religion at the same time they are used commercially to sell everything from laundry detergent to soup. In many ways, individuals who are unable to fluently communicate about sport render themselves irrelevant in mainstream society. Given this knowledge, sport and its dedicated study are overwhelmingly relevant. For me, it is also personal.

Sport and education are central components of my identity. When I was young, my family situation was chaotic. My biological parents divorced early on which led to a series of further parental relationships, children, divorces, and complications. I turned to sports and books for refuge. Books turned me on to fantasy and imagination while sports gave me a much needed physical outlet. I quickly realized I had an aptitude for both and pursued each vigorously. I learned to ski and skateboard when I was four and began participating in year-round sports including softball, basketball, and volleyball in the second grade. At the same time I had an insatiable appetite for reading. I read every spare moment I had; when I woke up, at mealtimes, in the car, while walking, and before bed. Wherever I went, I had a book or two with me. Two of my favorites were *A Wrinkle in Time* and *Matilda*. In addition to school sports, I also participated in gymnastics, roller skating, and water skiing recreationally. I often attended sports and recreation camps that enabled me to enjoy horseback riding, hiking, swimming, and ropes course skills. I surfed and body boarded on trips to the ocean while playing football and soccer on the beach. At the same time, I also excelled in school and, on average, read

three to five books a week (outside of school reading). When I was 11, I began to participate in Taekwondo which allowed me to combine my passions for sports and school. The written tests for advancing through the belt levels were as rigorous as the physical tests, often requiring three-to-five hours to complete. I loved studying the history and philosophy of the movements we learned.

My Taekwondo experience led me to first feel the connection between sport and education. I poured myself into practicing and studying, often spending more time preparing for Taekwondo tests than school. When I competed, I worked to channel the philosophy into my movements by imagining the young Korean students we read about and seeing myself training with them in ancient Korea. I also felt connected to the competition and my competitors through the history and our shared passion for the sport. As we traveled to various competitions, I understood a shared sense of identity and community; we were always welcomed by the families of our organization. Staying in their homes was like staying with extended family I had never met. The sense of belonging and stability was intoxicating for me during a time when my own family felt so disconnected. Sport helped me to make sense of myself and my feelings. I struggled to find my femininity among other young girls as I was not interested in dresses and makeup and playing house.

Through Taekwondo, I found female role models and peers that accepted me for being tough and didn't make fun of the clothes I liked to wear. I felt immense comfort in being viewed as an athlete. It was a reason to dress in shorts and t-shirts, to be dirty, and have endless scrapes and bruises. Sport gave me license to be aggressive and assertive,

whereas my being assertive in class was disciplined in my Catholic elementary school. I was regularly reprimanded for lacking social skills; being assertive was not considered appropriate feminine behavior. Because I did not accept my gendered role, I was marked as a trouble maker (Martino & Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2005; Morris, 2005). One of my teachers actually called my mom to encourage her to tone down my personality. My excitement toward learning in the classroom was perceived as unbecoming for a young lady. I felt a great deal of tension, particularly around my gender expression, regarding who I could and could not be in certain spaces. Sport was a space where I felt free. The classroom was a space where I felt constrained.

In high school, I continued in year-round sport participation, balancing school sports with Taekwondo and an honors curriculum. Away from the Catholic culture, school became another space where I felt alive; free to foster my love of learning and dream about my future. Despite my love of sport, I was not dreaming of a sport-related career in high school. Yet, I continued to find new ways to connect to sport. Upon entering my junior year I decided not to play softball because I wanted to do something different, and instead began working in the athletic training room with the football team. Again, I felt that connection between sport and education. In the classroom, I was learning the science and theory of anatomy and biology. In the training room I learned how to apply physiology and kinesiology through exercise, injury, and rehabilitation. On the sidelines, I observed the various ways coaches spoke to players, the players' responses to coaches, and the goings on in the game. Although I was no stranger to the sideline, as an athlete I focused on the game and my role. As an assistant trainer, I could

take everything in and appreciate the diversity of moving parts that work together to create the magic of sport.

I also became an assistant for the coach's weightlifting class where I could hang out with the football team. As I spent more and more time with the boys' teams, I began to notice distinct activities that revealed the dominant values and beliefs of sport. Our varsity men's basketball team had a well-known practice called "pink panties." If you were slacking on workouts or were in trouble for one reason or another, you had to wear the pink panties, which was actually a pink tutu/underwear combo that slipped on over your shorts. To wear the pink panties was to be publicly shamed in front of teammates and those watching practice. Additionally, I often heard coaches using the terms "girly," "girly," "pansy," and even "pussy" to discipline and/or motivate players. Although, I felt supported and appreciated by the coaches as an individual, I also felt confused by the underlying sense that using this style of motivation, whether through the pink panties ritual or by using femininity as a means of humiliation meant that ultimately, women and women's sports drew little respect. Furthermore, demeaning the feminine appeared to be not only accepted but a privileged form of speech. I began to understand that adopting this attitude toward women facilitated my acceptance in all-male spaces, particularly in sport. For example, the more I chided the guys for being girly or talked down feminine behavior, the more I was accepted as one of the guys.

This marked the beginning of my tension-driven relationship with sport. In spite of my overwhelming love for sport, there were many aspects of it that made me uncomfortable. Moreover, I was complicit in many of the parts that made me

uncomfortable such as partaking in demeaning the feminine and looking down my nose at female athletes that I considered were too “girly” to be *real* athletes. I had teammates who would apply makeup before games or who made sure their hair ribbons and earrings were showing. Since I gravitated toward sport to get away from this type of behavior, I felt justified in trash talking these types of girls. Although I felt empowered on the surface and even though I had been bullied for not being girly enough, something about condemning femininity felt very wrong. However, this is not something I really considered or even explored until after college.

In college I continued to participate in sports through intramural and club organizations. I also worked part-time as a referee, coach, and camp counselor. I pursued a degree in computer science, not because I enjoyed it but because it came easily to me and appeared to point me in a direction of financial success. In truth, I had no passion for computer science. However, it gave me an in with my father who is a bit of a computer genius. I also liked the way it felt to be a girl in a male-dominant degree. Even in 1999, there were only two other girls in the computer science program at that time. I enjoyed being good at something that girls weren’t perceived to be good at. I felt strong and independent whereas I felt society portrayed, in my mind, weak and dependent women as the most attractive and likeable. And even though I knew it was a bad fit from the start, I stubbornly stuck with computer science because it felt rebellious. I strove to resist social norms in as many ways as possible because I had felt like every single thing about me was wrong since I was little. I was always too loud, too aggressive, and too masculine. My body was all wrong because I had muscles before junior high and then

because my muscles were more developed than many of the boys in high school. My clothes were all wrong because I hated shopping, dresses, and shoes. I looked wrong because I had wild hair and dark skin and my mom was blond and white. My family was wrong because of multiple divorces and because my dad was dark and my mom was white. It seemed like no matter what I did or didn't do, I was wrong. Rebelling was my way of fighting against all the ways I felt I was inherently wrong. So I flipped the script and started to embrace going against the social grains of what was acceptable.

In spite of the perks I felt, the lack of passion for computer science left me feeling unfulfilled. I went to visit the head athletic trainer and see if I might be permitted to work in the training room. He told me that the only way I could be in the training room was to be enrolled in the athletic training program. I decided to make an effort to double major, even though I couldn't make practical sense of the program combination, so I could be back in the sport community where I felt most at home. At the same time, my roommates were dating members of the club men's lacrosse team. When they learned I was working in the training room, they asked if I wanted to come along on trips to be their unofficial trainer and tape ankles and such. I was giddy with excitement. For as much as I enjoyed competing as an athlete, I also found great satisfaction and purpose as a trainer on the sideline, even in an unofficial capacity. My roommate and I traveled with the team for four years, keeping the book, running the clock, and performing training duties within my realm of knowledge. I had never seen a lacrosse game prior to that point and I loved learning a new sport. This was a space where I not only felt at home but thrived in the space of an action-oriented learning environment. The athletic

training room and curricula also gave me a joint space to put sport and education together. Unfortunately, I was unable to sustain the dual majors and my tenure in the training room only lasted a year.

The decision to cease the dual majors was difficult and a major turning point for me. I still wonder where I might be now if I had chosen to pursue athletic training instead of computer science. Ultimately, I chose computer science because I thought it would make my dad happy and I believed it was a more responsible career choice. My second and third years of college were rough times for me personally. Many of my childhood issues had surfaced after years of ignoring them and I felt very lost and out of control. And even though I knew computer science wasn't making me happy, at the time it felt like one of the only responsible choices I was making. I made the decision and supported it by working hard to see it through to graduation.

Upon facing the end of my undergraduate education, I had two realizations. First, I had no desire to pursue a career in computer science of any kind. In spite of its financial possibilities, I was bored and unenthusiastic with the work. Second, I had a strong desire for teaching at the collegiate level. During my senior year I had assumed the role of resident advisor in one of the first-year student dorms. Over the course of the year, through academic and recreational programming, advising, and dealing with many of the difficulties that face first-year students, I fell in love with college all over again. My lackluster connection to computer science had smoldered my passion for learning quite a bit, but I found it again as I developed interactive tutoring/studying sessions and organized an inter-dorm Olympics. I remembered the electricity I once felt every time I

set foot on campus. I recognized that I was skilled in my role of academic and residential support and realized that a career in academia was a good fit. I decided that the best way to pursue what I loved was to become a college professor. My grade point average upon graduating was far from remarkable and I knew I needed some time to breathe and strategize my plan for graduate school. I assumed I would be ready to take on graduate school in two years time; but, two years turned into five. However, I strongly believe that timely break to focus on facing and working through my troubled childhood was imperative to my eventual acceptance and success in graduate school.

When I think about my life, sports and education are the two avenues that have always brought me home in the sense of feeling aroused and intrigued as well as belonging. When I have strong representations of both in my daily routine, I truly feel at my best. My world feels right. There are many moments where I can observe how much effort I have put into keeping them in my everyday experience. I share these passions with my family and the majority of my friendships have been made along the lines of either or both. Although I was not a *student-athlete* in the sense of a *varsity collegiate athlete*, I have always been a *student* and an *athlete*. In terms of my personal politics, nothing gets me revved up like discussing public education or power and control in sports. Whether you believe in divine intervention, or fate, or the alignment of the stars, I believe that the twists and turns in my life have led me to a professional path of sport and education. And as I strive to link my personal and professional passions in ways that complement and support both, I find great satisfaction and contentment in my ability to earn a living pursuing two of the great loves of my life.

Finding a Way In

I realized I needed to devise a strategic plan to facilitate my graduate school acceptance. After looking over potential program options in my area, I decided on the communication program at a nearby university. I had boiled my choices down to medical anthropology and communication but was particularly attracted to the interpersonal/family communication track in the communication program. Given the fact that I had no academic background in communication and a mediocre gpa, I decided to enroll in a couple of graduate courses prior to submitting my application. I also went and spoke with one of the professors in the department who would later become my master's advisor. I told her about my undergraduate experience, my struggles, and my desire to pursue a master's and then doctoral degree. We had a very nice discussion and I felt I had done what I could to contextualize my undergraduate grades, which weren't all bad. I also earned A's in my first two graduate courses. Shortly after, I was admitted into the master's program.

Early in the program, I decided to focus on sport as my topical niche. Based on my personal experiences, I endeavored to be knowledgeable and useful to the sport community in addition to teaching about sport in the campus classroom. Specifically, I wanted to work with student-athletes and coaches and those in positions of student-athlete/coach support. I also dreamed of working with rookie athletes as they transitioned into the life of a professional athlete and offering continuing support throughout their careers. Based on my experiences as an athlete, coach, trainer, and team manager over the years, I believed that I would need more than an advanced degree to become

respected as an educator in the sport community. Access to sport organizations, especially at collegiate and professional levels, is typically difficult and restricted (Adler & Adler, 1985; Kassing et al., 2004; Trujillo, 2013). Additionally, I didn't want to be on the outside looking in. I wanted to be involved as a community member. I decided that the best way to pursue my goals of teaching and working with varsity athletes was to begin working in some peripheral area of the Department of Athletics and Recreation (DAR) to earn credibility within the athletics community. I also felt that working within the community would supplement my credibility in the classroom in terms of working in my field of study. On a personal note, my decision to begin working in Club Sports was both academically and relationally strategic.

At the same time I was figuring out my path in graduate school and beyond, I was also in the beginning of my first serious romantic relationship. Based on what I experienced as a child, I had steered clear of relationships for the better part of my 27 years. However, I had recently met and fell in love with a kindred spirit and we had been living together for a year when I began graduate school. When I was in junior high, my mother began taking college classes and working toward a nursing degree. Her scholarly efforts became an ongoing source of conflict for her and her spouse at the time that led to their eventual divorce. Basically, he found her efforts to better herself threatening. As my current partner, Jared, had not finished his bachelor's degree and I was about to take on another six years of higher learning, I was sensitive to the relational implications. Although he seemed supportive and excited for me, I sensed potential trouble. It didn't

seem fair that I was embarking on a journey to pursue my dreams while he remained in a job that he wanted to leave in order to continue supporting us while I was in school.

Sport was a big part of our relationship; we attended many professional games, talked about sports in depth, and played fantasy sports together. I knew he wanted to be more actively involved with sports in a job capacity. The fall that I was accepted into a Master's program, we looked for potential job opportunities for him in the DAR. After a little research, we discovered there was no baseball team on campus. The varsity team had been gone for ten years and although there had been several attempts by students to start a club program, they were unsuccessful. Baseball was Jared's main sport and represented a deep love that he shared with his family. I made some calls about what starting a club entailed and together we decided to build the club. In addition to the relational benefits, this was the perfect opportunity for me to begin establishing credibility in the on-campus sport community. Although it meant a heavy commitment in addition to my graduate education, starting the club baseball team was easily the most important decision I made both professionally and relationally.

My goal was to work with varsity athletes. However, given the restricted nature of sport communities and organizations, I felt I needed to work my way into varsity sports from the recreation side of the department (Kassing et al., 2004). In his work with the Texas Rangers baseball organization, Trujillo (2013) discussed gaining access by working his way through less visible aspects of the organization while also making himself as visible as possible throughout the organization (p. 74). Similarly, I recognized gaining access to varsity athletics would depend on my ability to build

relationships and earn trust within other areas of the department. Furthermore, for me this was less about “gaining access” and more about beginning to establish myself as part of the community. Club baseball seemed like a great place to start. Not just because it was a way in, but also because it enabled me to serve the community and to connect with my partner while doing it.

Building the baseball program with Jared has been more rewarding than I could ever have imagined. In regard to my romantic relationship, it has been a wonderful source of shared labor, frustration, and enjoyment. We have had the great privilege of meeting and mentoring many young men and have established relationships with them and their families that will last a lifetime. Two members of the first team attended our wedding in Mexico. Even though managing the team while navigating the rigors of graduate school was often exhausting and overwhelming, it was concurrently a source of relaxation and application. My experiences with the team provided insight when I struggled with theories and concepts. Running the team also facilitated my education in university practices and politics on recreational sports. From fundraising, to branding, risk management, eligibility, rosters, uniforms, managing finances, organizing tournaments, road trips, and expense reports to making sure the team had water, snacks, sunscreen, ice, and a well-stocked athletic training bag on game days I was involved with everything first hand. After our first year, we established an executive board through which I trained senior players to run the program we had developed. Building a club program from scratch and running everyday operations enabled me to thoroughly experience the inner-workings of a sports team. While I wore various sport-related hats

up to this point, this experience took me through every detail of sport at relational, organizational, and operational levels. I can say without hesitation, that my success in this venture relied heavily on my relational communication skills. Establishing and maintaining relationships was at the heart of running this team.

My role with the club opened many doors for me. Through the club sport circuit, I met and interacted with various staff members throughout the DAR. I became familiar with many of the divisions of athletics and recreation including youth sports. Youth sports connected to varsity sports in several ways. First, there was an “introduction to sports” youth camp that gave children an opportunity to try a variety of sports. This camp was designed to funnel campers into sport specific camps that were run by the varsity teams. These varsity-run camps not only created awareness and loyalty to the teams but were also a source of revenue. I decided to approach the Youth Programs Manager of the intro youth camp for an internship. At the same time, I was conducting research for my master’s thesis which focused on parent-child communication in youth sports. In addition to my interviews, I also wanted to be actively involved with a youth sports program to ethnographically supplement my research. Getting involved with the youth camp was advantageous to my research as well as continuing to build experience and credibility within the department.

Through the youth sports internship I was directly involved with every aspect of the program from staff and payroll, to activity and venue scheduling, to coaching and disciplinary issues. I gained further knowledge and hands-on experience of program operations and the relationship between recreation and athletics. Following the summer

of my internship and the culmination of my research, I was invited back to take part in staff training and speak to parents about my thesis research results. As I approached the end of my second year of doctoral training, I had three solid years of experience working and establishing myself in the DAR community and I was ready to put the wheels in motion for my dissertation project. I felt that an internship with Student Athlete Support (SAS) in the DAR was the best place to both do my fieldwork and further my in-house experience. I emailed the Director of Athletics to request a meeting and discuss an internship opportunity. After speaking with her and several interviews with the director of SAS, I was accepted as an intern.

When I began my internship in SAS, I was not just a graduate student looking for a research site. I was an established member of the community through my work with youth sports and the club baseball team. I came to this position, not as a total outsider but with three years' experience working within the organization and had already established relationships with various staff throughout the department. For me, this represented an invaluable component of my internship because I was seen as a member of the community.

Discovering my Beliefs about Scholarship

Early on in my Master's education (circa 2007), I found myself gravitating toward critical and qualitative methods and theories. However, these interests placed me in an awkward position as critical studies were a rarity in interpersonal communication (Braithwaite & Baxter, 2008, p. 12). I also found myself increasingly at odds with research because the lack of writer/researcher voice in the majority of interpersonal

methods was difficult for me to negotiate. I had a hard time reading about such personal issues through an objective or distanced voice. I wanted to know who these scholars were and how they fit into their work. As I struggled to appreciate the continuum of ontological and epistemological commitments and how they influenced the research process, I felt more and more lost. For example, because “researchers rarely articulate explicitly their meta-theoretical commitments” I had difficulty determining what it was that felt off when reading certain articles (Braithwaite & Baxter, p. 10). Thus, something that is quite difficult to get a handle on in the first place continued to elude me. I first perceived the problem as quantitative and interpersonal because I generally found the distanced voice and writing in those articles. But then I found quantitative and interpersonal articles that resonated with me. I also discovered that I felt more comfortable with the literature we reviewed in my critical/cultural courses. I remember reviewing my thesis proposal with my adviser and she said, “I hear two voices in your paper, one social science and one critical and I am not sure how I feel about it yet.” At the time, I honestly didn’t understand what she meant. It took me quite a bit of time and headache, a variety of classes, and many conversations to trace the source of my struggles to assumptions of reality, sources of knowledge, researcher voice, positionality, and reflexivity. It wasn’t the method or specific divisions of the field as I first thought, but the approach to research.

Over the past six years I have been developing an approach that weaves in and out of various forms of critical, relational, engaged, applied, action-oriented, and community-based scholarship. Before I fully understood these terms as research concepts, I strove to

engage and work with the communities I was interested in studying, apply what I was learning in the classroom in the community, and also apply what I was learning in the community in the classroom. Before I could articulate my approach to scholarship, I moved forward doing what felt right by starting with a commitment to the community. I jumped in and started working, making myself useful to the public. Reason and Bradbury (2008) describe action-oriented research as “a work of art emerging in the doing of it” (p. 5). For me, the work became the art. In serving the community, the research aspect emerged organically through the work. The issues and nuances of the community arose through daily participation.

Articulating my meta-theoretical commitments. Argyris (1995) began his discussion of applied communication by listing eight of his biases toward research (p. 2). Because discerning meta-theoretical commitments in research has been such a struggle for me, I want to be clear about my values in relation to scholarship. Braithwaite and Baxter (2008) remind us that values and commitments are seldom explicitly presented in research. Thus, I choose to articulate and discuss my own as part of this dissertation project. These values are central not only to the way I choose to conduct my research but also the way I consume others’ research. I do not present these values “as claims about truth but as insights” into how I approach and evaluate research (Argyris, p. 2).

First and foremost, I align myself with the philosophy of action research as an *orientation to inquiry* (Reason & Bradbury, 2008). In other words, the community of action researchers are joined by a particular approach. “Action research rejects the notion of an objective, value-free approach to knowledge generation in favor of an explicitly

political, socially engaged, and democratic practice” (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, & Maguire, 2003, p. 13). I make no effort to be objective or distanced from my research. I come to sport and scholarship in deeply personal ways. The drive behind my graduate education and professional future is firmly rooted in personal and social responsibility. Put simply, scholarship is my way of channeling my passions toward service to our collective social benefit. Action researchers view research as a personal endeavor in which it is important to be transparent about the researcher’s investment and values (Brydon-Miller et al.). Rather than distance myself from my values and potential bias of those values, I strive to be open and reflexive about how they factor into my scholarship.

Second, I approach scholarship with specific goals of community engagement and action to work toward our collective social benefit. “The primary purpose of action research. . . is to liberate the human body, mind and spirit in the search for a better freer world” (Reason & Bradbury, 2008, p. 5). For me, “theory is really only useful insofar as it is put in the service of a practice focused on achieving positive social change” (Brydon-Miller et al, 2003, p.15). I love to write and believe in the importance of publishing work yet I lean toward privileging pedagogy and community engagement over *intensive* publication efforts. I was hesitant about including this sentiment because discourses of research and publication are so heavily privileged and rewarded in academia. However, as a critical theorist I believe it is important to confidently present my position and to feel I have the right to say that I value pedagogy and service over publication.

Third, I view collecting and producing knowledge as a situated and subjective venture. In terms of my ontological and epistemological commitments, I view reality as

socially constructed and take a subjectivist approach to knowledge validation (Miller, 2005). From the subjectivist view, “the social world is essentially relativistic and can only be understood from the point of view of the individuals who are directly involved in the activities which are to be studied” (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 5). This is largely why I choose ethnographic work. I believe that in order for me to interpret, understand, and contribute to knowledge production, I must take part in what I want to understand. This belief also connects to my axiological commitments. I believe that my desire to influence a situation or community for a greater good must be coupled with my willingness to inhabit the space I wish to influence. Chang (2011) said,

If critique is a deliberate, purposeful, and ultimately linguistic act, it must posit its target objects and place itself in the condition in which its objects are posited. A critic who forgets this not only forgets what critique is all about but also becomes, in this forgetting, stupid, or, as I say, uncritical. (p. 87)

For me, Chang is reminding us that quality critique is leveraged from a place of understanding rather than judgment and willingness to occupy that space of critique. In order to offer critique, we must see ourselves within the problem if not part of it.

Therefore,

knowledge may be defined as what we’ve learned working in a context of action and that is the result of the transformation of our experience in conversation with both self and others that allows us consistently to create useful actions that leave us and our co-inquirers stronger. (Reason & Bradbury, p. 5)

Every research project I have created throughout my graduate experience has been ethnographic. I have also endeavored to bring the knowledge I have gained back to the community and/or into the classroom. My desire for social change “does not start from a desire of changing others ‘out there’, although it may eventually have that result, rather it

starts from an orientation of change with others” (Reason & Bradbury, 2008, p. 1). As I often tell my students, I will not ask them to do anything I am unwilling to do myself. If I want to critique a situation, then I will also critique myself in that situation.

My fourth and final value is that scholarship should lead to action. Conquergood (1995) argued

As engaged intellectuals we understand that we are entangled within world systems of oppression and exploitation. We need to attend to the complex way macro-structures of power and consolidation penetrate and shape even the micro-textures of communicative interactions and intimacies. Our choice is to stand alongside or against domination, but not outside above or beyond it. (p. 85)

As such, by taking part in research that reveals systems of domination or oppression we implicate ourselves as part of that reality. We cannot ethically claim objectivity because, as researchers, we insert ourselves into the studied reality at the time we begin our research. At the point we join the academic conversation, we are involved. Following Habermas, I believe “the role of the critical theorist is to reveal the social structures and processes that have led to ideological hegemony” (Miller, 2005, p. 74). Whether this revelation happens in the classroom or the community, I believe we should also take care in the way we discuss hegemony. While I don’t try to hide my beliefs, I believe it is not my place to privilege my values but rather to teach the value of questioning privilege and power in the pursuit of truth. As I reflect on the beliefs and values that guide my orientation to scholarship, I can see a distinct approach to research emerging.

Conceptualizing a Critical Relational Approach

A major impetus of the proposed project is to work toward the development of a *critical relational* approach at the intersection of critical and interpretive meta-theoretical

perspectives. While various strands of what might be considered critical interpersonal work do exist, there is great opportunity to grow this area of scholarship (Baxter, 2011; Foster, 2008; Wood, 1993, 1995, 2004, 2005, 2009). In a recent lecture, Baxter (2012) argued for the necessity of future research that looks at the connection between agency and structure and the possibilities of paradigmatic hybridity, such as the linking of critical and interpretive perspectives. She encourages us away from the private/public binary that has dominated interpersonal work to seek out the ways in which our public and private lives become entangled. Conquergood (1995) and Giddens (1985) also echo the importance of investigating the connections between overarching structures of power and everyday communication and relationships. I distinguish my approach slightly from critical interpersonal, in favor of a relational approach. I align myself with Baxter (2011) in viewing communication and identity as distinctly relational.

Interpretive theory and research focus on meaning-making in everyday practices and relationships with the goal of greater understanding in situated communities (Braithwaite & Baxter, 2008). For example, the interpretive focus of this dissertation project involves a discursive and dialectical approach to meaning-making through the everyday practices of collegiate athletics with the goal of understanding student-athlete identity in the community and culture of collegiate sport. Critical theory and research focus on power and ideology, looking at voices and identities that are dominant or marginalized with the goal of revealing power structures, instigating change, and the recuperation of silenced voices and positions (Braithwaite & Baxter, 2008). Through the critical focus of this project, I examine power and ideology in collegiate sport culture. In

looking at the social structures that guide and constitute sport culture and the ways in which particular discourses of student-athlete identity are privileged while others are marginalized, I hope to illuminate power and ideology embedded in the overarching culture. An additional goal is to use the study to privilege marginalized voices and challenge dominant discourses. As I bring the two perspectives together to create a critical relational approach, I focus on discursive power struggles as meaning is negotiated through everyday practices and relationships. I also look at the connection between everyday practices/relationships and social structures with the goal of social, and potentially, ideological change.

This dissertation project and everything I have discussed that led me to this project is connected to my desire to educate and support athletes and the greater sport community. Because sport is pervasive throughout society, I pursue critical work in sport as an avenue of social justice, not just for the sport community but for society at large. In a recent forum discussing the meaning of critical work, Ramsey (2011) described being critical as an exercise in learning how to live *in-common*, or rather, as social beings who share communal space. In learning to live, he explained, we must first recognize our existence and be thankful for our ability to critique that which we already have. In critiquing our present and past realities of existence, we embrace and theorize our potential in resistance to what has been. In an effort to move toward not yet realized realities, we seek to unlearn the old ways that we have come to accept in order to re-learn new possibilities. “The pedagogical moment in being critical teaches us the cost of having been, the cost of having to have learned too many unwanted things, and it teaches

us what it means to be ones who must live on from amidst all that stands in our way” (p. 90). I support this conceptualization of a critical approach for two reasons. First, I appreciate Ramsey’s suggestion that critical efforts should begin from a place of gratitude. This is important because critical work and critique in general, runs the risk of being overly cynical. In other words, critique in and of itself has little value and can do more harm than good without supportive and practical movement toward change. Second, this concept of what it means to be critical links theory and action. It also speaks to the critical relational approach to research I discussed above by highlighting the utility of revealing oppressive practices, considering their power in guiding social relations and moving on from the mistakes of the past to a more humane and inclusive future. Now that I have explained my investment in sport and education, the approach I take to scholarship, and the meta-theoretical values I bring to the table, I will now present the project at hand.

Examining Identity and Structure in Sport Culture

Nearly everything about sport¹, from what counts as sport, to who gets to play, to how the game is played, represents a contested space (Adams, Anderson, & McCormack, 2010; Coakley, 2009) filled with contradictory messages (Kassing & Barber, 2007; May, 2001; Stahley & Boyd, 2006). For example, the discourses of sportsmanship and integrity are both dominant in sport. Yet, we repeatedly observe athletes, coaches, and fans whose actions oppose such discourses. The meanings ascribed to and tensions

¹ I use the term *sport* when referring to sport as a social system/culture. I use the term *sports* when referring to the host of individual or collective sport-related activities.

inherent in sport become animated as it is discursively and communicatively constructed. Through this project, I take a constitutive and dialogic approach to sport. Across disciplines, sport is perceived as a communicative phenomenon. French philosopher Pierre Bordieu (1978) noted the emergence of sport as “the moment from which it is possible to talk about sport” (p. 821). In the field of communication studies, Kassing et al (2004) asserted “communication is not only fundamental but arguably constitutive to the experience of sport (p. 374). Specifically, “membership and participation in the community of sport are communicatively accomplished and maintained and that communication functions to constitute and give meaning to the experience of sport” (p. 373). Cultural studies scholar Morgan (2002) described sport as intersubjective, “the product of communicatively generated agreements” (p. 286). In his telling of ancient sport, sociologist David Potter (2012) explained that “sports develop as a constant dialogue” (p. xxv). While not specifically articulated, sport is also presented through these definitions as inherently *relational* based on its dialogic manifestation. In spite of divergent disciplines, interests, and approaches, many scholars agree that sport is not only communicative but a vibrant social process that is continually evolving through the interaction of multiple voices. Baxter (2011) asserted that “meanings are wrought from the struggle of competing, often contradictory, discourses” that are animated through multiple voices (p. 2). Thus, meaning ascribed to sport is dynamically constructed as it flows through a discursive struggle in everyday interaction. With this in mind, I take a communicative approach to sport culture and focus on the ways that identity and sport are dynamically and dialectically constituted through dialogue. The inherent tensions

constituting sport culture offer a rich space to theorize meaning making within the interaction of competing discourses.

Collegiate sport in particular offers a unique opportunity to investigate discursive and dynamic complexity. While historically a popular topic of current affairs, collegiate athletic programs across the country have been under fire; recruiting violations and impropriety at the University of Tennessee, Ohio State University, and Boise State University represent a few of the many recent investigations into collegiate athletic programs (McGee, 2011). Additionally, allegations of sexual misconduct at Syracuse University and Penn State University have left communities in a state of confusion and unrest (McManus & Fish, 2011; Scweber, 2011; Zirin, 2011). As such, *ESPN Magazine* called 2011 “The Most Scandalous Year in College Sports. . .Until Next Year” (McGee, 2011). Over the past few years, questionable issues and practices continued to arise (Wetzel, 2014). Scandal is anything but a recent issue in collegiate sport. Benford (2007) noted, “Evidence abounds that college sports are rife with corruption. Over a century of reform efforts have failed to bring about lasting structural and cultural changes” (p. 1). I assert that the challenge of structural and cultural change lies within the multiple and often competing discourses that constitute sport culture.

Culture, Structure, & Enactment

Before I continue, I want to be clear about how I am conceptualizing *culture* and *structure* and how I observed the two for analysis. I have thus far designated structure and culture as central foci for this project. Culture is often broadly understood as a coherent set of beliefs, attitudes, values, and practices shared by a group of people.

Collegiate sport culture is largely consistent with overarching sport culture but with attributes distinctive to collegiate sports. I also want to be clear that my use of the term collegiate sport refers to National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) competitive sport. Although the base definition is widely shared across disciplines, culture can be conceptualized and approached in a variety of ways. Martin and Nakayama (1999) draw our attention to the inclusive nature of a dialectic approach that enables the entertaining of multiple viewpoints. A dialectic view depicts culture as contested, an ongoing site of struggle over various discursive understandings of respective cultures (Ono, 1998; Baxter 2011). Baxter further underscored the meaning that arises from the interpenetration of multiple and often competing discourses.

Cultural analysis involves “sorting out the structures of signification” that are symbolic and representative of the culture (Gertz, 1973, p. 9). Scholars have argued that the structure of collegiate sport represents the primary cause of dysfunction as well as the space reform efforts should be directed (Benford, 2007; Branch 2011). In thinking about structure, I draw largely on structuration theory (Giddens, 1984). For Giddens, a *system* is an observable pattern of reproduced social practices, such as collegiate sport. *Structure* represents the observable properties that render the social practices an observable pattern.

Social systems, as reproduced social practices, do not have ‘structures’ but rather exhibit “structural properties and that structure exists, as time-space presence, only in its instantiations in such practices and as memory traces orienting the conduct of knowledgeable human agents” (Giddens, 1984, p. 17). One can observe various activities around the world and determine a specific activity as sport based on structural properties.

The practice of gymnastics and football may appear very different; however, their everyday practices exhibit similar structural properties such as conditioning workouts, specialized staff, and injury rehabilitation. In other words, structural properties indicate “the way things are done” through repetition and consistency in the routine and practice of sport. Thus, structuration enables a way to observe how social practices span time and space to create social systems. Through this project, I looked at structures within sport culture that not only guide everyday interaction such as the negotiation of identity, but also contribute to the coherence and constitution of the culture.

In taking a critical relational approach, identity must be situated within relational and cultural contexts. Baxter argued, “Just as sociocultural life is deeply relational, so relating is a deeply sociocultural process” (p. 9). In other words, identities are discursively animated through varying personal, social, and cultural relations and belief systems. We come to understand our various identities through relational interaction with others. As we interact, our talk gives voice to cultural discourses that animate meaning in how we perceive ourselves in relation to another in any given moment. Given this orientation, along with my attention to structural properties that contribute to the coherence of collegiate sport, I focus on discursive constructions of athlete identity and sport culture through the *enactment of sport*. The enactment of sport is:

concerned with everyday practices and habits of language. . . not only the direct impact of communication on performance, interpersonal interaction, and identity but also how communication functions to shape the prevailing ideologies, discourses, and beliefs about the way things are done and what is natural. (Kassing et al., 2004, p. 376)

Focusing on enactment will also unveil how discourses and ideologies are animated through interaction. Recent research has emphasized the ideological underpinnings of communication in and around sport identity (Enck-Wanzer, 2009; Mercurio & Filak, 2010; Travers, 2011). Given the perspective of enactment I will be looking specifically at everyday practices and language that animate discourses of student-athlete identity and the ideologies that underlie those discourses.

Theoretically Making Sense of the Discursive Mess

As I take a dialogic and constitutive approach and strive to theorize the multiple, competing, and often contentious beliefs about what sport and athletes do and should represent, I turn to *relational dialectics theory* (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996; Baxter, 2011). Relational dialectics theory provides the theoretical guidance that I believe is necessary to wade through the complexity and cacophony that permeates our understandings of sport. While much of the literature speaks to the various and competing beliefs circulating throughout sport, I have yet to find a study that examines the discursive interplay of these ongoing struggles or that theorizes tension within sport as meaningful. For example, as I will suggest through the literature review, the term *student-athlete* has represented a controversial and ongoing debate throughout history that continues today. Through dominant discourses of the NCAA we are led to believe that *student* and *athlete* identities are harmonious and compatible. Yet issues of academic cheating and recruiting infractions date back to the first intercollegiate contest and remain an ongoing issue (Yost, 2009). We tend to view such activities as violations; however considering that they have always been an integral part of collegiate sport structure

complicates our understanding of *violations*. We have not adequately investigated the discourses that animate the struggle and the interplay that occurs as the discourses of student-athlete are invoked in addition to considering how this ongoing tension influences the everyday lives of student-athletes, the beliefs that guide collegiate sport culture and the impact on our broader social culture. Relational dialectics theory will aid in illuminating the discursive complexity of student-athlete identity and how the various discourses interpenetrate to create and complicate meaning.

Relational Dialectics Theory

Relational dialectics theory (RDT) is a theory of relational communication oriented specifically to look at how meaning arises within multiple and competing discourses. RDT is rooted in *dialogism*, which Holquist (1990) coined to describe the dialogic focus of Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin's work. Dialogism encompasses the idea that existence can only be understood in a dialogic sense; "the very capacity to have consciousness is based on *otherness*" (Holquist, 1990, p. 18). In other words, reality derives from ongoing awareness of and communication with other beings. Additionally, dialogue and therefore meaning, are always in progress and process; there is no final say. Dialogue remains open for emerging voices, meanings, and possibilities to arise. RDT is closely related to the interpretive paradigm, privileging a situated approach to meaning. However, Baxter and Braithwaite (2010) designated RDT as most appropriately within a fourth paradigmatic perspective which Deetz (2001) called a dialogic perspective.

"Dialogic research emphasizes dissensus production and the local/situated nature of understanding. . . . Language replaces consciousness as central to experience" (pp. 31-

32). In other words, the dialogic perspective views meaning to arise within the clash rather than the unity of discourses. Additionally, departing from the interpretive perspective, dialogic research privileges the discourse over the individual; meaning arises in discourses invoked by relational partners rather than within individual consciousness. Because individuals are continually invoking a variety of discourses as they move across various relationships and contexts, meaning and identity are understood as “fragmented and always in flux” (Baxter, 2011, p. 39). Power is also viewed as present in discourses, not individuals or groups.

Domination is seen as fluid, situational, and without place or origin. Even group and personal identities cannot be seen as fixed or unitary. The attention is to reclaim conflicts suppressed in everyday experiences, meaning systems, and self conceptions.” (Deetz, 2001, p. 31)

Put another way, power is asserted in everyday relations rather than at social or systemic levels. For example, from this perspective the power of racism has less to do with laws such as Jim Crow and immigration than the way people relate to each other in daily interactions. Relational dialectics theory is one of many diverse perspectives that fall under the dialogic paradigm.

Drawing on Bahktin’s body of dialogic work, Baxter and Montgomery (1996) first articulated relational dialectics theory over fifteen years ago and Baxter (2011) continues to grow the theory. The main premise of RDT stems from Bahktin’s observation

All social life is the product of ‘a contradiction-ridden, tension filled unity of two embattled tendencies’: the centripetal (i.e., discourses of unity or centrality) and the centrifugal (i.e., discourses of difference, dispersion, and de-centering. (cited in Baxter, 2004, p. 182)

In other words, RDT begins with the assumption that relating takes place when two or more voices co-construct meaning through discursive interpenetrations of similarity and difference. It is through this struggle of unity and opposition that selves are written into being, what Baxter and Montgomery (1996) called *becoming*. Becoming illustrates relating in the dialogic sense in that selves are not isolated beings to be revealed to another, but rather social beings constituted through interaction with another (Baxter, 2004). Bahktin (1990) believed that we are uniquely positioned to see in each other what the self is unable to see on its own. Therefore, we need others to construct a clearer view of the self and relationships. This constitutive process is not static but ongoing and continually in flux through which the social co-construction of identities and relationships changes across moments and time.

RDT 1.0

Relational dialectics theory has grown and changed over its seventeen years of development. Although my work specifically draws on the most recent iteration, RDT 2.0 (Baxter, 2011), I believe it useful to briefly discuss the first iteration of RDT (which I call RDT 1.0 for the sake of clarity) and how it has evolved to RDT 2.0. Baxter and Montgomery (1996) discussed four assumptions that oriented the original articulation of RDT. The first assumption is *contradiction*, which centers the idea that any given social situation gives rise to the interplay of opposing ideas and opinions. These oppositions provide the basis for relationships and social reality; through multiple opinions we co-create meaning. The second assumption is *dialectical change*, which characterizes the idea that unity arises within disparity. For example, consider the interplay of opposing

discourses of stability and change. Because we understand there will always be opposing discourses, we understand there will always be fluctuation and change. Thus, stability arises from the inevitability of change. The third assumption is *praxis*, which presents the idea that individuals act in the moment to make communicative choices at the same time they are influenced by the actions of previous individuals as well as recognizing that present actions could also become prescriptive for others. For example, I love baseball. I regularly choose to consume baseball in a variety of ways. My choice to pursue baseball as a passion is influenced by familial interest in baseball, playing as a child, as well as my spouse's love for baseball. Because some of my friends know I love baseball, they choose to follow the sport at times or make decisions to go to or watch games because I am such a fan. My family regularly exposes my daughter to baseball through our individual and collective enjoyment. If she chooses to play or watch baseball, that choice will be her own but will have been heavily influenced by the familial association. The final assumption is *totality*, which is "a way to think about the world as a process of relations and interdependencies" (p. 15). Relationships are characterized by multiple and interdependent contradictions which should be understood in relation to each other. The totality and interconnectedness of multiple contradictions give rise to the relationship as it evolves.

Bakhtin's *contrapuntal analysis* is the analytical tool utilized by relational dialectics theory (Baxter & Braithwaite, 2010, p. 54). This method asks the following questions: 1) What are the discourses given voice in the text? 2) In what ways are these discourses linked to broader cultural already-spoken, the already-spoken of the parties

relational past, and anticipated not-yet-spoken represented by idealized or normative judgments? and 3) How do these discourses interanimate to create meanings-in-the-moment—do parties elide the discursive struggles or construct discursive mixtures? (p. 55). The majority of early RDT research attended mainly to the first analytic question, focusing on identifying competing discourses in family relationships such as autonomy/connectedness, public/private, presence/absence, openness/closedness (Baxter & Braithwaite, 1998; Baxter & Ebert, 1999; Baxter et al. 2002; Baxter et al. 2004; Sahlstein, Maguire, & Timmerman, 2009; Suter et al., 2006; Suter & Daas, 2007). In her discussion of RDT 2.0, Baxter (2011) calls for future research to focus on the second and third analytical questions and specifically, how opposing discourses interpenetrate.

RDT 2.0

Utterance chain. RDT 2.0 builds on the first iteration by moving beyond identifying competing discourses, to contextualizing ideas within a larger discursive chain and theorizing discursive struggles throughout the utterance chain. RDT anchors in the idea that individuals “give voice to discourses in their utterances” (Baxter, 2011, p. 202). An utterance is a single “turn at talk” (p. 49). As we interact and communicate with each other, we invoke systems of meaning through social structures. These systems of meaning are links in an utterance chain that connects to both past and future utterances. For example, when I engage in a conversation about student-athletes and their role in collegiate athletics, the others involved and I will invoke multiple discourses through our utterances. These utterances not only connect to the socio-cultural and political past of collegiate athletics but also current events and the intended or perceived

future. As we interact, we co-construct meaning through our shared and divergent perceptions of the discourses we invoke. Each of our utterances draw on the multiplicity of voices that each of us has woven together in our “individual” realities, which are not at all individual, but speak to a collective chain of consciousness. In looking at relationships, communication, and practices of collegiate sport, it is necessary to unpack how each are embedded within important cultural systems with respect to the *polyvocality* of voices that constitute the culture. Polyvocality refers to the idea that each spoken utterance links multiple voices from the past, present, and future together. “This polyvocality is characteristic of interpersonal communication; any given utterance cannot be understood as isolated from other utterances, and interpersonal relationships cannot be understood as isolated from cultural systems of meaning” (Baxter, p. 203).

Baxter and Montgomery (1996) discussed four links in the utterance chain that encompass the polyvocality of voices: *distal already-spoken*, *proximal already-spoken*, *proximal not-yet-spoken*, *distal not-yet-spoken*. Each utterance connects to these four links in the utterance chain. Baxter continues to view the utterance chain as integral to current RDT development. The distal already-spoken refers to the cultural history and knowledge that becomes animated when invoked in the present. Any discussion of sport is foregrounded by the memory of tribal, pastoral, and Olympic sport that continuously blends the past with the present. Current talk of sport is full of discourses of competition, rivalry, and showmanship that cannot be divorced from the rich cultural history of sport. The proximal already-spoken refers to the past and present of the interactants’ relationship. When a coach and player engage in a conversation, their past discussions

and relational history heavily influence how both will attempt to construct and derive meaning from the present conversation. The proximal not-yet-spoken refers to the interactants' assumptions of how the other is interpreting the interaction. Drawing on both cultural and relational history, coach and player will communicate in anticipation of a perceived response from the other. The distal not-yet-spoken anticipates a generalized other that links again to culture. The coach may consider how this interaction will be interpreted by the athletic director, who has progressive views in contrast to his own "old school" training and thinking. Conceptualizing the utterance chain provides a robust space to theorize the discursive and dialectical complexity of student-athlete identity and collegiate sport culture. Examining the utterance chain in everyday practices will also contribute to an enhanced understanding of how practices have implemented structure across time.

Discursive struggle. In addition to situating utterances within the utterance chain, Baxter (2011) has endeavored to focus more attention to the discursive struggle of competing discourses and how meaning manifests from the interpenetration of discourses. Discourse is distinguished by *single-voiced* and *double-voiced discourse*. Single-voiced discourse occurs when only one discourse is viewed as absolute and no opposing discourses are given voice—in this case we have monologue rather than dialogue. Bahktin (1981) called this *authoritative discourse*. "The monologue of authoritative discourse is fused with tradition and authority that affords it a taken-for-granted status" which is inscribed with a sense of absolute truth (Baxter, 2011, p. 125). There is no struggle of voices; there is simply one commanding voice or multiple voices

invoking one discourse. For example, before player's associations (i.e., unions) were established, labor contracts in sports were at the sole discretion of league owners and the commissioner who privileged the game (read profitability) over player welfare. The theoretical intention of double-voiced discourse is that all discourses are given equal voice; however this is an idealized situation. For example, once players associations were established, the ideal situation would involve civilized collective bargaining over labor contracts and league rules that give equal voice to owners and players. However this is rarely the case.

More often we experience discursive interplay through a *centripetal-centrifugal* flux during which relational parties consider various discourses in an ongoing fashion—at various moments a particular discourse is central while others are marginalized (Baxter, 2011, p. 123). Discursive interplay occurs throughout the utterance chain; through invocation in everyday talk, discourses compete for centrality. Power lies within the centrality of the discourse.

The center is easily legitimated as normative, typical, and natural, and thus functions as a baseline against which all else is somehow positioned as a deviation. By contrast the centrifugal margins are positioned as nonnormative, off-center, unnatural, and somehow deviant. (p. 123)

Interpenetration occurs when competing discourses are negotiated in relation to each other as well as other discursive struggles present throughout the utterance chain. It is important to note that not all competing discourses interpenetrate; when they do, the opportunity for new understandings and meanings arise.

Baxter, and previously Baxter and Montgomery (1996) have discussed the discursive struggle in two ways, *diachronic* and *synchronic*. Diachronic interplay

illustrates the centripetal-centrifugal struggle in an alternating circular motion. There are two types of diachronic interplay, *spiraling inversion* and *segmentation* (Baxter, 2011). The spiraling inversion of discourses occurs when discourses are alternately centered and marginalized over time whereas segmentation occurs according to topic or context rather than time. The majority of early work in RDT focuses on diachronic interplay and the rotation of competing discourses.

Synchronic interplay illustrates simultaneous presence of multiple discourses, specifically in relation to the utterance chain. Baxter discusses four conceptual dimensions which illuminate variations of discursive struggle throughout the utterance chain: *antagonistic-nonantagonistic struggle*, *direct-indirect struggle*, *serious-playful struggle*, and *polemic-transformative struggle*. Antagonistic synchronic interplay represents a clash of ideologies or values whereas a nonantagonistic interplay indicates multiple discourses within the utterance that do not invoke ideological differentiation. There may also be multiple discourses within antagonistic interplay however they specifically point to diverging systems of meaning. Synchronic interplay may also reflect a direct or indirect invocation of discourse. Direct discourse acknowledges and legitimizes the interplay of at least two, if not multiple distinct discourses. Indirect discourse enables ambiguity through terms with loose definitions that presuppose multiple meanings but do not speak directly to them. Indirect discourse can also be achieved by giving voice to an alternate discourse in an underhanded or “zing” type manner or by hedging or exempting one’s own ideas. Indirect discourses allude to but do not directly engage alternate discourses. The serious-playful dimension refers to tone.

Individuals may enact parody, misunderstanding, and absurdity to indirectly challenge discourses in a playful manner (p. 137). The final dimension of synchronic interplay involves polemic-transformative struggle. Polemic interplay refers to competitive and oppositional discursive struggle whereas transformative interplay results in a *hybrid* meaning where the two discourses combine to create a new meaning or an *aesthetic moment* where the two discourses interpenetrate in ways that drastically alter their meaning systems (p. 139). The transformative discourse represents the ideal discursive interplay where no single discourse is privileged and dialogic potential is realized as new systems of meaning emerge from struggle (p. 141). Baxter has referred to transformative discourse as *dialogic creativity* (p. 9).

Since the publication of RDT 2.0, recent research has focused more discursive contextualization within the utterance chain and the interpenetration of discourses (Baxter et al. 2012; Foster, 2011; Norwood & Baxter, 2011). For example, Faulkner (2012) shared her feelings of ambivalence toward her pregnancy given various academic discourses that speak negatively to the cost of pregnancy in relation to publication and productivity. She also discussed her inability to keep her pregnancy private as her belly grew which inevitably invited unsolicited public awareness and discussion of her pregnancy. More research is necessary to further examine utterances as part of a larger discursive chain as well as the intricate nuances of discursive interplay throughout the utterance chain.

Sport identity and relationships provide an excellent space to continue to extend the RDT literature beyond family communication and further investigate discursive

interplay throughout the utterance chain. The everyday practice and enactment of identity in sport relationships is steeped in distal and proximal already-spoken. When a baseball player steps to home plate, announcers discuss everything he has done that particular night as well as that season. They discuss performance with his current team as well as past teams and potentially with teams scouting that particular player. His stats will be shown in comparison to current players of his caliber as well as similar players throughout the history of baseball. Additionally, he will be discussed in light of up-and-coming players as well as his potential viability for the remainder of the current as well as the following season. The nature of sport enables an important look at the discursive struggles located throughout the utterance chain. I will also suggest that many of the discursive struggles in sport happen synchronically and present the opportunity to further theorize synchronic interplay.

Discursive and Dialectical Tensions in Sport Culture

Recent discussions of collegiate sport in the popular press point to scandal and corruption in university athletic programs and their governing body, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) (Branch, 2011; McGee, 2011). Words such as “corruption” and “scandal” are, admittedly, seemingly provocative and sensational. Yet, these words point to the discursive and dynamic tensions that complicate sport culture. Actions deemed corrupt and scandalous in collegiate sport become meaningful when juxtaposed with the two fundamental ideals of collegiate athletics, *amateurism* and *integrity* (Yost, 2010, p. 19). Amateurism represents the notion that collegiate athletes are not paid, nor do they receive benefits beyond their athletic scholarships, which

parallel academic scholarships (i.e., tuition, books, housing, meal plan). Integrity implies adhering to ethical and moral standards that, at the very least, frown upon academic misconduct such as cheating.

The tension between discourses of integrity and corruption represents one example of how meaning arises within competing discourses. Without the discourses of amateurism and integrity, the discourses of corruption and scandal are less provocative. Despite the idea that recent incidents involving the use of ineligible players in competition and paying players' cash under the table directly contradicts both amateurism and integrity, it is within the interplay of these competing discourses that collegiate sport becomes meaningful. Thus, collegiate sport offers an excellent space to illuminate the construction and negotiation of discursive tensions.

Although I will not tackle the depth and breadth of collegiate sport in its entirety in the present study, one of my main goals is to investigate the discursive construction of student-athlete identity and the ways in which discourses of student-athlete identity speak to an overarching understanding of collegiate sport culture. The culture itself is tightly bound to the ways in which student-athletes perform their identity. Student-athletes represent the heart of collegiate sport and, therefore, are expected to embody the meanings of collegiate sport, such as amateurism and integrity.

In addition to looking at discursive constructions of student-athlete identity and how such constructions relate to collegiate sport culture, another main goal of this study is to better understand why a century of reform efforts in collegiate sport have failed to inspire structural and cultural change. With an eye toward (re)envisioning how lasting

change might be implemented, one way to explore reform efforts is by looking at the relationship between everyday practices and structures. Examining constructions of student-athlete identity through everyday collegiate sport practices will contribute to a greater understanding of the social structures that guide sport culture and the relationship between everyday practices, structure, and culture. A greater understanding of this relationship will add to knowledge regarding past reform struggles and hopefully aid in future efforts.

Through a review of relevant literature I will demonstrate that student-athlete identity and the structures that guide collegiate sport culture are discursively and dynamically constructed through multiple and often competing discourses. Scholarly and popular literature also point to a controversial past and present of collegiate sport through its mixed messages and tensions. Current affairs in collegiate sport continue to depict a culture that appears to defy its core values of integrity and amateurism through everyday practices. The reviewed literature indicates a relationship between everyday practices/interactions and structure, however that relationship remains unclear. I designed the following study to take an in-depth look at discursive constructions of student-athlete identity through the everyday practices of collegiate sport to gain a better understanding of collegiate sport culture and theorize ways to challenge some of the enduring and untoward structures. To better understand how dialectical tensions in competing discourses influence the meaning making process this project explored the following research question:

RQ1. What are the competing discourses that animate student-athlete identity through everyday collegiate sport practices and how does their interplay constitute the meaning(s) of student-athlete identity?

To gain a clearer picture of the relationship between everyday constructions of student-athlete identity and the social structures that guide collegiate sport culture this project explored following research question:

RQ2. How do the competing discourses invoke the structures within collegiate sport culture?

In addition to describing the discursive and dialectical constitution of student-athlete identity and collegiate sport culture, I also have reviewed literature discussing considerable efforts that were and continue to be taken to challenge untoward aspects of collegiate sport. However, scholars have suggested that the institutions themselves as well as the internal structure of collegiate sport often thwart progress. In addition to detailing a rich description of discursive constructions of student-athlete identity and their relationship to structure and collegiate sport culture, this study is designed to provide practical information and implications for community members and sport educators interested in reform. This effort is not only important for student-athletes, but the university and greater communities influenced by collegiate sport. Based on the reviewed literature suggesting tensions between student-athletes, non-athletes, and faculty and the lack of information regarding how multiple and often competing discourses perceivably complicate everyday practices, interaction, and reform efforts, I also explored the following research question:

RQ3. How can the interpenetration of competing discourses that construct student-athlete identity inform community members in efforts to (re)develop everyday practices?

In order to address my research questions and project objectives, I first review relevant literature in chapter two. I begin by contextualizing athlete identity and sport culture within selected historical moments, pointing to ideological roots within ancient and Greco-Roman sport. I then discuss cultural discourses constituted through the beginnings of organized recreation in America as well as early labor relations in professional baseball. Next, I identify cultural discourse in broader sport literature before moving into collegiate sport literature. Throughout the review, I discuss the literature through the lens of RDT to both demonstrate the utility of the theory and provide illustrative examples of how the theory helps makes sense of the literature in relation to project objectives. In chapter three, I further discuss my research approach through combining critical and interpretive methods. I explain my choice to weave reflexivity and ethnographic narrative into my contrapuntal analysis. In chapter four, I discuss my ethnographic and contrapuntal analyses to answer my research questions. And finally, in chapter five I discuss the broader implications of my findings in relation to the literature, theoretical implications of the project, suggestions for practical application and future research, as well as my concluding thoughts.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Contemplating the Dialectical Constitution of Sport Identity & Culture

As a gritty, aggressive, in-your-face high school basketball player, I idolized Sir Charles Barkley. I wore his number, attended his basketball camp in Phoenix, and was nicknamed Barkley by my coaches. During that time I didn't pay much attention to Charles beyond his on court performance. He was hard-headed, hot-tempered, and physical with no apologies. He was the guy you wanted in the paint when a shot was taken. I adored him. I regularly found myself defending his antics and behavior because damn, he could play.

In college I began to develop a sense of social responsibility. I attended a very liberal and socially conscious school where students advocated for various types of environmental and social awareness and action. There were rallies and marches for everything from legalizing marijuana to recycling to women's rights. I began to understand and appreciate just how much our actions affect each other and our communities. Within this environment, I began to feel unsettled about many of the choices I was making. My behavior at the time was fairly reckless and destructive as the feelings and memories I fought so hard to stuff from my childhood began to resurface

and I struggled through personal and identity crises. As I questioned the impact of my actions on the people around me, I found myself losing respect for Sir Charles because he was making a public effort to say that he and other athletes were not and should not be seen as role models. He said he was not paid to be a role model. I disagreed. As children we idolize athletes, we dream of becoming them. We watch them, we mimic their style of play, we repeat what we hear them say, we beg our parents for jerseys and hats and t-shirts and tickets to see them play. Because of the way athletes are glorified and commercialized for profit in the public sphere, I believed, like it or not, they have a responsibility to all of us, not only to be the best athletes they can be, but also the best human beings they can be. If they didn't want to accept that responsibility, they did not deserve the money they were paid. This is not a responsibility one can shrug off, as Charles was trying to do; social responsibility is embedded in the identity of athletes, public figures, and well, all of us. Whether or not we choose to acknowledge and accept how our personal actions affect the people around us, we all carry a burden of responsibility to each other. We occupy personal and social spaces, always under the watchful eyes of others. Whether in our homes, at work, shopping for groceries, out on the street or on a public stage what we do contributes to our social reality and collective experience. In other words, whether one person or the whole world is watching, what we do *matters*. Accepting social responsibility is not about being perfect or always doing the right thing, but acknowledging that we all have social impact and, at the very least, striving to be accountable to the influence of our actions.

Like Charles Barkley, athletes in America negotiate complex and contested identities that are always in flux. They are beings of temporality, subject to the ebb and flow of *sport* time. Today's hero is tomorrow's villain while yesterday's failure disappears with tonight's victory. A once firmly held belief about a rival or an idol can change with a trade, perceived act of disloyalty, or a heroic performance. Current research highlights complex negotiations of identity in sport across race, class, gender, sexuality, nationalism, and ability (Butterworth, 2006; Enck-Wanzer, 2009; Leonard, 2010; Mean & Kassing, 2008; Lindemann & Cherney, 2008; Newhall & Buzuvis, 2008; Oates, 2007). Commenting on sports media, Billings and Hundley (2010) assert identity as "an extensive negotiation that is always changing, always being interpreted and reinterpreted, and always contested by various entities (p. 5). In addition to negotiating personal expressions of identity, athletes are always already symbolic of local, national, and global identities that connect to fans, owners, sponsors, and team affiliations. Thus, sport offers a rich space to explore identity as dynamic and dialectical through the multiple, ever-changing, and often competing discourses that speak to our various understandings and expectations of what it means to be an athlete (Baxter, 2011).

As a longtime fan of sport, I often found myself making snap judgments about the actions of athletes. As I discussed in the vignette above I once felt very strongly that athletes do not deserve the money they make, especially with the lack of social responsibility that is so often, but not always, displayed. However, through the process of my graduate education and the amounts of literature and history I have consumed, I have come to realize that it's just not that simple. At first, it makes sense to view the

actions of athletes, or any individual, as isolated and specific to that individual, dyad, or group and the context of the specific situation. In other words, it is easy to frame Charles Barkley's commercial campaign against athletes as role models as the actions of a selfish and arrogant man. However, relational dialectics theory posits that we cannot accurately understand communication and relationships without considering the past, present, and future discourses that animate meaning in any given communicative action. Sir Charles does not exist in a vacuum; his actions are best understood when contextualized within the historical and cultural role of athletes and sports in society.

I have chosen relational dialectics theory to inform this project because it offers the tools necessary to investigate complexity in the dialectical and volatile space of sport culture and, arguably, any aspect of social life. RDT frames social experience as much more intricate and connected than we often consider in the moment. Given the enormous influence of sport in society, it is imperative that we seek to understand how an institution and culture that claims to value and embody sportsmanship, integrity, and fair play has historically and systematically provided the backdrop for corruption, scandal, and impropriety. Taking a step back to situate the irony of sport within our broader culture, I believe RDT can similarly offer insight into freedom and equality in America; specifically, how a country founded on freedom and equality continues to assert and hail those inalienable rights while at the same time denying that freedom and equality to many of her citizens. On the other hand, sport (and America) has also enabled a stage for some of the greatest resistive and liberating moments in our history. In light of its commitment

to locating meaning in the ongoing clash of competing discourses, RDT is an excellent theoretical tool to investigate such a phenomenon.

Through this chapter I review relevant literature that speaks to and supports the utility of the RDT in regard to sport and identity. RDT is particularly suited to illuminate the complexity of student-athlete identity and because of the sustained discursive battle that has constituted collegiate sport since its inception. Considerable efforts to reform the structure have been largely fruitless for over one hundred years. Finding common ground is not working. Thus RDT offers an alternative approach by opening spaces of possibility and clarity through dissensus production—seeking meaning within competing beliefs. I have organized chapter two to present the sport literature in a way that illuminates the theoretical principles described in chapter one.

Theorizing Polyvocality, Tension, & Power in Discourse

Discourses of student-athlete identity are diverse and invoke a host of relationships across sport culture. Collegiate athletes negotiate a multitude of varying, competing, and often contradictory beliefs about who they are and should be through a variety of relationships. From the NCAA, to university administrators, boosters, parents and family members, alumni, teachers, fellow students, coaches, fans, campus and local communities, sports journalists, television networks, reformers, academics, and of course the athletes themselves (to name a few interested parties), there are literally thousands of people who have a vested interest and opinion regarding what student-athletes do and should represent. According to RDT, student-athletes are continually negotiating

contextual and cultural identities that arise as they move between and among these various relationships which invoke voices that exist in the past, present, and future.

In order to identify the discursive struggles that animate the meanings of student-athlete identity and collegiate sport culture, I begin the literature review by situating athletes and sport within an historical context. In order to fully understand discursive struggles that involve distal already-spoken, it is necessary to identify relevant discourses throughout the history of sport that animate the cultural underpinnings of sport and identity. I briefly review relevant literature in ancient and Greco-Roman sport before moving into the beginning of organized recreational and professional sport in America. I then discuss labor-relations in baseball which provided the foundational structure and practices for all labor-relations in professional sport as well as collegiate athletics. Following the historical review, I present the broader discursive understandings of athletes and sport culture in current literature before narrowing to collegiate athletics. Throughout the review, I worked to present the literature to not only illuminate my critical relational approach but also support the utility of relational dialectics theory in investigating identity and culture in sport.

Discursive Tensions throughout History

Commenting on sport from ancient times to present day, Potter (2012) asserted: The dialogue of sport has always been ignited by the divergent interests of three groups: those with the money to sponsor events (let's call them owners, for now), the athletes and the fans. Given that they are competing against others of their ilk, owners have an interest in sponsoring events that make them look good, and to that end they will occasionally give way to the interests of the athletes, and at times also to the fans, usually by getting the athletes to do something new, different, and possibly dangerous. This enables the fans to feel that they have some control. It also creates very strong feelings about who athletes should be

and how they should act. Athletes never just represent themselves, no matter how much they would like to or feel that they do. . . (pp. xxvi-xxvii)

Through this observation, Potter situates sport as a dialogic process manifesting amidst the tensions of diverging and often competing interests of owners, athletes, and fans. He also hints at the power dynamics between the groups, presenting the owners as those with the most power. Although these three entities are often at odds, they are inevitably interdependent. In Greek, athlete “literally means a person who competes for a prize” (p. xxv). In order for an athlete to compete, in a professional or spectacular sense, there must be an organized competition. Spectators are necessary to bear witness to the competition. From the poetic prose of Homer, to ceramic artwork, to Sumerian texts, sport revealed itself in the form of entertainment in every major civilization of the Bronze Age² (Potter, 2012). In the ancient world, such physical demonstration was primarily initiated for the amusement of the king. As early as 2000 B.C., texts portray athletes as paid members of the royal court. It is important to understand that although payment represented freedom in the way of earning a living as an athlete, it also invoked a power dynamic of employment and service that marked the athlete and respective performance or competition as owned by the king.

Tensions between identity and performance. Potter (2012) shares two stories of competition from the *Illiad* that speak to the tensions that foreground athletes, power, and contest. The first involves a spear throwing contest in which king Agamemnon decides to compete. At the moment he announces his intention to compete, Achilles,

² The Bronze Age civilizations represent groups across Europe, Asia, and the Middle East including Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greek & Roman territory.

organizer of the games, stops the contest and declares the king winner. In the second story, following the end of a chariot race, Achilles announces that he will give second prize to Eumelus, even though he crashed his chariot and lost. “The best man brings in his single-hoofed horses in last place. Come, let us give him second prize as is fitting. . .” (Homer quoted in Potter, p. 28). The first example points to the ultimate power of the king over the contest itself. If competition was truly valued for the sake of competition, the king would have no problem taking part in the contest whether or not he came out the actual winner. However, here we are able to understand that the preserving the ultimate power of the king is of utmost importance. The king does not even have to compete to be declared the winner, and this is accepted, or at least understood and unchallenged, by the competitors and the crowd. The second example presents the idea that beyond the king, there are competitors who are perceived to be more worthy than others based on pedigree and status; except this time, the competitor actually participated and lost. However, who he is, is presented to overrule the actual results of the contest. Achilles intends to offer him a prize he did not earn “based on perceived virtue” rather than “achievement” (Potter, p. 29).

I share these stories at the beginning of this review for two reasons. First, Potter’s assertion that the dialogue of sport has always been ignited by the divergent interests of the owners, athletes, and fans is not only a primary theme I will flush out of the relevant literature, but also illustrative of relational dialectics. The three main groups that contribute to the dynamic manifestation of meaning in sport are also constituted through tension because they are interdependent, in spite of their competing goals. The ways in

which we perceive and understand owners, athletes, and fans as individuals and/or groups, and indeed the ways in which they perceive themselves and each other, rely upon the meanings ascribed to each group at any given time. These groups are not mutually exclusive. Second, these stories lay the groundwork for the power dynamics between the groups. Although the king (owner) appears to have ultimate control, there are times when he must bend to the desires of the fans or athletes to protect his interests. And while discursive power has and does shift, albeit temporarily, to athletes through acts of resistance, they continue to ultimately be at the discretion of those who organize the contest and competition and, periodically, the fans. I begin with these stories and this specific orientation because present day athletes are predominantly viewed by society as endowed with great power and privilege. While this perception is supported to some extent, it is my intention to highlight an alternate view and show how discourses of the power and privilege of athletes are manipulated and ultimately constrained by the owners.

Significant cultural discourses. Important discourses emerged in ancient sport. From the stories above we begin to see athlete identity constituted through discourses of *ownership*, *virtue*, and *achievement*. The discourse of ownership locates the athlete as a paid employee of the court and ultimately controlled by the king. The discourse of virtue identifies winners according to status whereas the discourse of achievement identifies winners based on actual contest results. These discourses interact to animate various understandings of athletes and competition. For example, whether a winner is determined by virtue or achievement depended largely upon the competitors. If the king

chose to “enter” the contest, he would immediately be declared the winner without an actual contest. These discursive struggles remain relevant as we move through history into the present. We are also able to observe the beginnings of structural properties in sport. Owners, athletes, and fans are integral to any competition from chariot races outside a royal palace, to gladiator games in the coliseum, to rat-baiting or bare-knuckle fist fights in underground rings, or nation v. nation competition in the Olympics. Additionally we see that a competition results in a winner and the winner receives the prize. The rules, competition, and prize are all designated by the owner. The ideology that underlies the competition designates the owner as the one with the ultimate power. This power is demonstrated through the lack of resistance on the part of athletes and fans when discourses of virtue are privileged over achievement.

Greco-Roman sport. Historical accounts of the Greeks and Romans suggest that organized sport facilitated social power and control through discourses of sex, class, and racial difference (Coakley, 2009). Patriarchy played a subversive role in regard to gendered participation, privileging discourses of protection of women and child bearing. The dominant perception that reproduction was a woman’s fundamental duty enabled sexism to masquerade as chivalry (Coakley, 2009, p. 66). Within this ideology women were easily limited or excluded from participation for ‘their own protection.’ Similarly, race and class divisions were implemented to distinguish the ‘barbaric’ competition of slaves and peasants from the ‘civilized’ competition of the upper class. This segregation also provided an outlet for the lower classes to take their aggression out on each other rather than focus it toward rebellion. The ruling classes of Greece and Rome arguably

used sport and competition to privilege and institutionalize the discourses of gender, class, and race that kept them in power. The use of sport as a strategic conduit of social influence carried into the early practices of sport in the United States.

In this section I have contextualized sport culture and identity through ancient stories and accounts of sport that reveal significant and longstanding dialectics contributing to the cultural constitution of sport. In the next section, I continue to identify foundational cultural discourses as I discuss the establishment of organized sport in America.

Organized Recreation & Baseball

The late 1800s gave birth to two important institutions in American sport: baseball and organized recreation (Zirin, 2008). I begin by discussing organized recreation. Sport historians Gorn and Goldstein (2004) comment:

By the end of the century, many reformers believed. . . sports could deflect tensions away from oppressive social structure and channel energy into safe activities that taught the modern industrial values of hard work, cooperation, and self-discipline, and thereby help secure social order (p. 104).

Here, discourses of recreation, hard work, cooperation, and self discipline interpenetrated to stimulate controlled empowerment for the working class while ultimately benefitting the ruling class. Although the values overtly associated sport participation as a positive pursuit for participants, the underlying goal was social control. The first organized youth sports league in the U. S. was spearheaded by Theodore Roosevelt in 1903. The Public Schools Athletic League (PSAL), financed by wealthy business men, was implemented to intentionally structure the free time of the lower class and mentally prepare them for war. The mission statement, however, articulated different

intentions, “to provide opportunities for educating students in physical fitness, character development and socialization skills through an athletic program that fosters teamwork, discipline, and sportsmanship” (Zirin, 2008, pp. 34-35). While the mission statement presented the goals and purpose of sport to be for the greater and common good, the intention of PSAL was to protect and serve the needs of the ruling class. The discrepancies between the underlying purpose of organized sport and what it was proclaimed to be represent the crux of how sport has largely escaped accountability and why dedicated sport inquiry is necessary and important. Here, we begin to understand the complex and multivocal constitution of organized sport. Through the beginnings of organized recreation, we continue to observe discourses of ownership and control in athletic participation. We continue to view organized sport as financed by the wealthy and influential, now business men rather than royalty, as well as significant and strategic ties to political figures.

As organized recreation grew in America so did the development of baseball. As America’s first professional sport, the business of baseball is foundational to the business of American sport. Baseball paved the way for big business and labor relations that were integral to establishing dominant discourses of identity, culture, and structure that continue to guide organized competitive sport at all levels. Since no other country “hosts big-time sports at institutions of higher learning,” the culture of collegiate sport is distinctly American (Branch, p. 3, 2011). Baseball is also distinctly American. Coined America’s pastime in 1856, baseball as the representation of America’s game is more ideology than origin. Or as Mark Twain proclaimed, “Baseball is the perfect expression

of the conquering age of Americans” (quoted in Lowenfish, 2010, p. 27). Beginning with baseball, sport and dominant American culture are meaningfully intertwined. Thus, greater understanding of the depth and complexity of this relationship has implications beyond the scope of sport.

Labor relations. The establishment of professional baseball came at a time when discourses of labor in America were particularly turbulent. In the late 1800s, post-civil war America was experiencing a shift in labor relations. Labor unions were gathering momentum as news of strikes cluttered the papers. The Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions passed the eight hour work day in 1868 for federal workers and the first Labor Day march took place in New York in 1882 (Center for Labor Education & Research, 2010). Amidst the national struggle for ethical labor standards, baseball turned professional in 1869 and in 1885, the players formed the first baseball union, The Brotherhood of Professional Base Ball Players.

In 1876 William Hulbert, prominent businessman and owner of the Chicago White Stockings, formed the first Major League: the National League of Professional Base Ball Players. The implementation of the new league changed the labor relations in organized professional baseball by solely vesting power in the owners while rendering players powerless. In other words, players were no longer welcome at the table of baseball business, an hierarchical distinction that remains in place today. The National League (NL) justified this move by blaming the instability, gambling, and general disorganization of baseball’s formative years on the players in spite of the owners’ cloaked involvement (Heylar, 1994). Around 1879, a gentleman’s agreement, soon to be

known as the infamous reserve rule, was employed by the owners (Lowenfish, 2010). Each club would reserve a certain number of players each year for the purpose of stability; this agreement ensured that other owners would not attempt to lure reserved players from other clubs (a regular occurrence up to this point). In theory, this rule was considered to be a necessity for furthering the game by both the owners and players, albeit via contrasting justifications. The owners considered the rule necessary to “discipline [and] preserve morale” (Lowenfish, p. 33). John Montgomery Ward, president and founder of the Brotherhood, had another view. He posited “The reserve rule takes a manager by the throat and compels him to keep his hands off his neighbor’s enterprise” (p. 32). Ward, who initially supported the fundamental necessity of the reserve rule for the purpose of stability, grew wary of the gentleman’s agreement. He didn’t feel that the owners would honor the agreement and eventually led the Brotherhood to request that the rule be officially inserted into player contracts; a request he would come to regret. In 1888 the reserve rule became an official clause in player contracts.

Despite their ambivalent position on the necessity of the reserve clause, the players grew wise to its perverse potential. The ambiguous yet ingenious language of the clause, which seemingly extended a player’s existing contract for one season should he reject the new contract, in fact bound him to a club for life. Each player’s contract was perpetually and indefinitely renewable. Because of this contractual tethering, owners not only owned the player but the right to sell and/or trade him for a profit without his consent beyond the original, seemingly temporal, contract. What’s more, the club

owners, not unlike other industry magnates at the time, took to wielding the blacklist as a means to enforce the reserve rule. Any player who showed indifference or attempted to elude the reserve rule was released and blacklisted, meaning no other club would hire him. The blacklist afforded the owners absolute control. When players began to be traded, uprooted without their knowledge or consent (some found they had been traded by reading the morning paper), they cried foul. Two players in particular sought to change their circumstances and initiated leaving their clubs for an alternate franchise. Deacon White, who was well respected for his moral character, was asked to be team president of the Buffalo club. When White's NL owner discovered the news he said, "White may have been elected president of the Buffalo club or president of the United States, but that won't enable him to play ball in Buffalo. He'll play in Pittsburg or he'll get off the earth" (Lowenfish, 2010, p. 33). Up until this point, the players still at least wanted to believe that the reserve clause was for the good of the game. Now it became apparent that the clause functioned solely to strip them of their rights as laborers and they argued, as American citizens (Spalding, 1911). The owners essentially owned a player's employability and livelihood as baseball professionals.

The underlying sentiment of the reserve clause rang clear: the owners believed they had *ownership* of the players and were justified to buy and sell them as commodities. This vision of labor and ownership in America may be understood as indicative of the times and the sharp class distinction between the magnates and the laborers. Perhaps as scholars we can theorize that in post-civil war America this type of labor relation made sense, whether or not we agree. However, the reserve clause

persisted in baseball for nearly a century. Following the Sherman Antitrust Act³ of 1890, players continued to fight the reserve clause on the basis that it violated antitrust laws. However, until 1976, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the right of clubs to reserve a player for life based on the premise that baseball was a game and not a business. The approval of the Supreme Court demonstrated the monumental importance bestowed on baseball and the inconceivable lengths taken to protect the game which was clearly a business. On the eve of the historic end of perpetual contract renewability in baseball, the Major League magnates succumbed to quasi hysteria, desperately claiming that the reserve rule, especially its renewability, represented the heart of baseball and if the players won free agency rights, America's game would die (Lowenfish, 2010). This was not the case; disproving one hundred years of owners' justification and legal support from the Supreme Court that absolute power over players was necessary. Or in the words of Tony Lupien, "The owners have proven that their power structure is not 'for the good of the game'" (Lowenfish, 2010, p. xii).

It is perplexing to consider how the owners managed to convince the players, the courts, and the American people to accept their labor structure as peculiar and necessary to the business of baseball. Given the fact that this structure forced a player to honor the perpetual renewability or be forced to quit baseball, it clearly violated anti-trust laws against monopoly. Yet, Major League Baseball succeeded in circumventing anti-trust law even though some Supreme Court Justices referred to baseball's exemption as

³ The Sherman Antitrust Act was passed to protect the free market system by preventing the restriction of trade and rendering monopolies a felony.

“unreasonable, illogical and inconsistent” (Light, 2005). Up until 1869, baseball was regarded as an amateur’s game in which players should not be paid in order to maintain the integrity of the game; parallel to the current sentiment toward collegiate athletes. However in 1869, baseball went from game to business when Henry Wright decided to pay his Cincinnati Red Stockings and charge an admission fee (Burns, 1994). Oddly enough, after fifty years of business in baseball, in 1922 the Supreme Court declared baseball exempt from antitrust laws because “it was a sport and not a business” (Light, 2005, p. 37). This historic legal situation exemplifies discursive power. The power of the *baseball as sport* discourse continually defeated the *baseball as business* discourse even though the structure of baseball clearly and irrefutably positioned it as a business (i.e., the players were paid and generated revenue). A curious side note reveals that the Chief Justice of this landmark decision was not only the former owner of the Cubs baseball club but also future president William Howard Taft’s brother. The discourse of virtue arises importantly within this situation as the interests of the baseball magnate and the Chief Justice prevail over the ballplayers in spite of a clear legal violation. The position of the Chief Justice and his relationship to the president aided in privileging the discourse of baseball as sport which took on an authoritative position and persisted as truth. The discourse of ownership was also given voice as this ruling provided team owners with complete control over their players.

The one and only player’s league. In addition to the reserve rule, there is another historical turning point integral to understanding discursive constructions of power and identity in sport; the rise and fall of the Player’s League. The implementation and effects

of the reserve rule led baseball players to organize and rebel. Because the structures of the National League (i.e., players' contracts, league rules) forced them to accept the rule or quit the game, they decided to form a new league. In 1889, the Brotherhood announced its intention to form a new league, The Players League, in which players and capitalists (financial backers strategically named to dispel ideas of ownership) would work co-operatively in the business of baseball. The NL declared war on the Players, claiming they had no grounds for their argument and no right to rebel. Unable to legally retain the defecting players as the contracts pertained solely to the National League, the NL was helpless as over 100 players joined the Players League (Lewis, 2001). This move demonstrated the owners' power as discursive. For one season, a co-operative approach to labor relations in professional baseball flourished, albeit not monetarily (how many businesses see profit in the first year?!). However, the NL magnates regained power by convincing the capitalists that they had no hope for financial success. Once they believed that their investment had failed, the capitalists prematurely accepted defeat in spite of their unrealized success (Lewis, 2001; Lowenfish, 2010).

The NL used a number of rhetorical strategies through headlines in the newspapers to convince the Players League and their backers that they were beaten even though they were not. For example, they published fabricated sales receipts that showed the NL with earnings far beyond the actual. The NL additionally used the newspapers to appeal to the fans through preserving the integrity of the game. The war between the two leagues had disrupted the game of baseball quite a bit for the fans, specifically because the National League took to refusing games with the Players League. However, the NL

blamed the establishment of the Players League for the disruption of the baseball season and pointed to the athletes as greedy and undeserving of playing America's beloved game (Spalding, 1911). The fans privileged the owners discourse and rallied against the players. In the end the players and the capitalists were outsmarted, out-maneuvered, and basically bamboozled by the magnates, ending the most significant power play initiated by athletes in the history of sport. Never before or again have players organized to form a league run by players rather than owners. Curiously, most baseball players and fans have no idea this epic event even took place. However, the subversion of the Players League is no accident and continues to illustrate discursive power.

Following the dissolution of the Players League, the NL strategically equated the failure of the Players League with the irrationality of dissent. They warned that future resistance to their labor structure would only result in the disruption of the national game to the detriment of the undeserving American fan. About a decade later, a historical review of professional baseball in the popular publication, *Spalding's Official Base Ball Guide*, alluded to the revolt without naming it, as insignificant and described the players' failure as baseball's success (Chadwick, 1903). This marked the future and strategic discursive absence of the Players League in the institutionalized memory of baseball. There is no mention of the Players League in the hallowed halls of the Baseball Hall of Fame, which claims to preserve the history of baseball. And while John Montgomery Ward is represented in Cooperstown, there is no mention of his role in organizing baseball's first union or the Players League.

The story of labor relations in baseball is vital to understanding culture and labor relations throughout sport. We observe several important discourses and tensions animating identity and competition that not only tie to those identified in ancient sport but also current sport. The discourse of ownership arose through a major legal ruling and the labor practices of owners that situated team owners as owning rather than employing ballplayers. Tension arose as players sought to be treated as employees but were treated perceived as personal property; players were literally bought, sold and traded as commodities rather than human beings. The attitudes of the owners further reflected discourses of ownership through their beliefs that the players had no right to speak on their behalf and were rightfully positioned at the behest of the owners. The discourse of ownership was limited to employment as owners could not force them to play, thus players did have the option of quitting, however many had spent a lifetime developing their skills and to quit was to squander their life's work and ambition. Discourses of *labor rights* and *greed* animated the ballplayers efforts to be treated fairly as employees. Owners dismissed their actions saying ballplayers should be content with their privilege in playing America's game. Tension arose when athletes attempted to challenge the terms and conditions of their employment as laborers and employees and were perceived as greedy and undeserving of their privilege to play baseball. Finally we observe discourses of *game* and *business* animating understandings of professional baseball. Tensions arose as the importance of baseball as a game dominated the importance of baseball as business in regard to labor relations with players. When players attempted to

assert labor rights, they were denied those rights based on prioritizing the game of baseball over the business of baseball.

The history of labor relations in baseball not only established important discourses of ownership and preserving the “integrity” of competition, but also illustrated the idea of discursive power as fluid and situational. Baxter (2011) explained that power is not incumbent in structural systems but rather “resides in discourses—the systems of meaning that produce and maintain these social constructions” (p. 40). From this view, the owners gained power not because of their position as owners or through the reserve rule but because they managed to assert power through privileging the idea that complete control of players was necessary to preserve the integrity of baseball and that baseball was not a business. A similar argument rationalizes control of student-athletes and denial of their identity and rights as laborers to preserve the integrity of collegiate sports (McCormick & McCormick, 2006). The fluidity of power was further exemplified when the players rebelled against the ownership and started the Players League and again when the NL triumphed over the players. The recognition of this fluidity is reflected in the ongoing efforts to prevent student-athletes from earning employee status at their respective institutions which would enable them to organize collectively negotiate their labor rights. The NCAA has routinely called upon the discourse of amateurism (read, it’s just a game not a business) and the idea of the student-athlete as students first to deny labor rights (Wolverton, 2014). The arguments are strikingly parallel; athletes must be controlled for their own good and the good of the game/competition, which is held in the highest regard.

The story of baseball's beginnings as a dominant power in America is also the story of the first and last challenge to player-owner relations in professional sports (Lewis, 2001). Although I would argue that the actions taken by the Players League represent, perhaps, the most significant event in the history of organized baseball and sport, the ultimate lesson of the Players League lies not in what they did or their perceived failure. The critical piece of this event is how the NL undermined the efforts of the Players League by discursively constructing and enabling its perceived failure while concurrently framing that failure as necessary for the greater good of baseball. The triumph of the NL was not the defeat of the Players League but the measures taken to delegitimize and stigmatize any such dissent to prevent its recurrence and to caution against allowing players a voice in their labor conditions. Furthermore, Major League Baseball succeeded in positioning itself as the guardian of the game, forever reconstructing any and all acts of labor dissent in baseball as selfish acts of self-aggrandizement fueled by the greed of super stars to the detriment of America's game.

In this section I have continued to contextualize sport identity and culture within foundational historical occurrences. The beginnings of organized recreation and professional baseball reveal important cultural discourses that are pertinent to understanding sport and identity in current events. These sport institutions also continue to reflect discursive tensions within sport. Before I review current literature, I pause briefly to acknowledge that I am not simply reviewing but also analyzing and critiquing the literature to support the utility of a dialectical and dissensus based analysis of identity and sport culture. In other words, I argue that the significant discursive tensions

constituting sport culture warrant theorizing meaning within the clash of cultural positions. I also critique the literature to show that I am taking a position on how I want to contribute to discussion.

Critiquing Sport Culture

In his introduction to the recent publication *Sports and identity: New agendas in communication*, Butterworth (2013) challenged the community of sport scholars to “take sides” and “contribute to the public discourse we study” (p. 5). As I take a stance through my work, I recall Chang’s (2011) position on the importance of being mindful of and accountable to my position as a critic as well as placing myself within the space of critique. On one hand I am a giant sports fan, madly in love with and devoted to particular sports while constantly abating an overdeveloped competitive drive. On the other hand I find many aspects of sport to be glaringly abhorrent and grotesque. There are times when I feel my stomach turning as I cheer and roar with the crowd because I realize the totality of what I am supporting. For example, the construction of new sports stadiums can be very exciting but they most often come at a great expense to their cities, re-allocating public money to private revenue streams, with no guarantee of public financial return (Garofolo & Waldorn, 2012; Knoll & Zimbalist, 1997). In another example, the violence that contributes to sports’ on-field entertainment value also connects to violence perpetrated by athletes off the field, specifically violence against women (Benedict, 1997). Answering Butterworth’s (2013) call and following Conquergood’s (1995) assertion that scholars become politically entangled through scholarship, I acknowledge that I am invested in sport both personally and professionally

and I am also committed to acknowledging that my consumption of sport places me squarely within the community I am critiquing.

Thus far, I have allocated a significant portion of this literature review to specific historical occurrences and events that I believe to be particularly relevant to sport, identity, and culture. Taking a step back to situate the history of sport within our broader human history, there is a clear pattern of control that spans time and place. Each generation yields individuals and groups that believe they are morally and justifiably better than others. And beyond this belief, that those who are “better” have the right to exert power and control over those who are “lesser.” Whether speaking of Hitler or Stalin, colonizers from multiple countries, slave owners, terrorists, activists, abusive partners, exploitive employers, sports owners, or the bully on the playground we can observe this practice at varying degrees unfolding in every corner of the world century after century. Sport is one of many cultural institutions (e.g. religion, politics, education) that illustrates the naturalization of this desire to control, police, and subjugate bodies. Moreover, sport in particular, privileges discourses of ownership and control for “a greater good.” The discourses of *ownership*, *virtue*, and *achievement* are not solely prominent in sport but in our human culture. However, the culture and practice of sport offers an exemplary window to observe such entrenched beliefs; that athletes (some more than others) can/should be owned and/or controlled for their own good and the good of the game which serves a higher social and political purpose (i.e, baseball as America’s game). And additionally, that certain people (i.e., owners and commissioners) have the

right to govern and constrain personal expression and identity within the space of sport as a service to preserving the integrity of the game.

Sport represents a unique and dialectical space, full of integrity and hypocrisy. It is a space that simultaneously liberates and restricts. And while ample sport scholarship to date reminds us of

the dialectical tensions. . . inherent to the communication of identity. . . [and] the significance of contestation” it is my intention to further investigate the nuanced meanings that arise within the ongoing tensions and contestation in order to further theorize dissensus production. (Butterworth, 2013, p. 6)

Put another way, I aim to find common ground within tension. In the next section, I review current literature in sport, focusing on the dialectical tensions that constitute identity and culture as well as highlighting the various ways that bodies and identities are policed, constrained, and controlled through the discourses of *ownership*, *virtue*, and *achievement*.

Dialectical Tensions in Sport Identity & Culture

In the previous section, I shared a brief discussion of ancient sport through Greco-Roman history because there are clear connections between modern day and ancient sport along important cultural, structural, and discursive lines. From there I focused on the beginning of organized recreation and professional sport in America. For the purpose of the present project, I look specifically at current literature involving American sport. I do this for two reasons. First, as previously mentioned, the focus of this project is collegiate sport, which is distinctly American based on the big business aspect (Branch, 2011). The big business of collegiate sport specifically articulates with the big business of capitalist driven professional sport in America. While competitive sport exists elsewhere in the

world, nowhere are the discourses of capitalism and sport as prominent as in America. Second, no matter how contested or problematic, America privileges discourses of freedom and equality, through our dominant culture and specifically through sport. Research shows ample and strategic ties to American culture and patriotism through sport (Billings, Butterworth, & Turman, 2012; Butterworth, 2005, 2010; Denham & Duke, 2010; Pope, 2007; Real, 1975; Trujillo, 1991, 1992). Discourses of American freedom and equality are dominant in American political and popular discourse and thus present a longstanding opportunity for critical discussion. For example, discourses of freedom and equality compete with discourses of morality in regard to laws against same-sex marriage. Ironically, the majority of arguments against same-sex marriage are grounded in Christianity, which challenges our constitutional right of religious freedom. Similarly discourses of sportsmanship, integrity, fair play and character pervade sport competition. Yet the literature overwhelmingly suggests that America's *win at all cost* ideology negates sportsmanship and integrity. Additionally, in spite of our belief that sport is one of the few spaces where pure talent overrides identity complications, the literature also shows that the discourses of *virtue* and *achievement* remain steadfast as athletes are held to narrow identity categories through invasive and ongoing policing of identity (Yandall, 2014). In the following section I present the multiple and often competing discourses animating sport identity and culture that offer a rich and robust opportunity for theorization.

Paradox of Sportsmanship & Winning

One of the reasons sport culture can be so difficult to comprehend is the presence of synchronic, or simultaneously occurring, antagonistic discourses (Baxter, 2011). Antagonistic discourses reflect competing ideologies or cultural clashes such as the discourse of sportsmanship and discourses of winning and win-at-all-cost. These discourses connect to discourses of virtue and achievement through competing understandings of what it means to win and be a winner. On the one hand, a winner is someone who embodies the virtue of sportsmanship through fair play and respectful competition. Such a competitor may be perceived a winner contrary to actual contest achievement. On the other hand, a winner is also someone who wins via achievement through whatever means necessary, even through disrespectful and unsportsmanlike conduct and sometimes cheating (i.e., through banned performance enhancing substances). Discourses of sportsmanship and winning pervade sport culture and continuously clash, animating our cultural understanding of athlete identity through competition.

The discursive struggle of sportsmanship and winning begin with youth sport participation. Moral justification is the number one reason parents initiate and/or approve of youth sports participation; research shows the parental belief that youth sports will introduce values and produce moral benefits in the lives of their children (Dunn, Kinney, & Hofferth 2003; Coakley, 2006; Ryska, 2003). Kremer-Sadlik and Kim (2007) “underscored the important function that sports have in family life as a socializing tool for culturally cherished skills and values” (p. 35). Although sportsmanship and

confidence were discussed as values by the parents, the value of winning was regularly present in the interactions. Approximately 35 million children between the ages of 5-18 participate in organized youth sports (Statistic Brain, 2013). Yet, approximately 70% will quit by age 13; over-emphasis on winning is cited as the number one reason children are dropping out of youth sports (ABC, 2000; Fish, 2003). Here we observe that while the discourse of sportsmanship is perceived to de-center the discourse of winning, the experience of youth sport participation reveals the dominance of winning.

Perhaps one could argue that sports have the potential to privilege both winning and sportsmanship. However, that possibility is complicated by parallels between sports and war and the enactment of winning. Preparation for war represented the main underlying goal of the initial development of organized recreation, which renders sportsmanship problematic (Gorn & Goldstein, 2004). According to Merriam-Webster, sportsmanship refers to both “fair play: respect for opponents, and polite behavior by someone who is competing” and “conduct: fairness, graciousness in winning and losing.” War refers to “a state of usually open and declared armed hostile conflict between states or nations” or “a state of hostility, conflict, or antagonism.” By definition discourses of war and sportsmanship are antagonistic and reflect competing belief systems, yet war and sports have long been paired as complementary. Many present day sporting contests reflect hostile acts of war rather than gracious and respectful competition. Some experts suggest unsportsmanlike conduct is on the rise on and off the field (WebMD, 2001). War metaphors and representations of athletes as warriors are salient in sport culture (Denham & Duke, 2010; Howe, 1988; Messner, Dunbar, & Hunt, 2000). Research reveals that

coaches draw on “narratives of war, gender, and sexuality to facilitate aggressive and violent responses for enhancing athletic performance” that equate to a militaristic sense of duty and honor (Adams et. al, 2010, p. 278). In addition to the direct connections between war and sport, war also privileges the discourse of winning at all cost, a discourse which has become significant in competitive organized sport. In many ways, sport reflects the ideal that winning has become synonymous with winning at all cost. Although winning and sportsmanship are often discursively positioned as complementary in popular culture, the literature demonstrates that the meanings attributed to winning and sportsmanship speak to competing ideologies.

Buford May (2001) addressed the “sticky situation” of sportsmanship, asking how we can expect our youth to exhibit sportsmanship when a “win at all cost” mentality represents a dominant American discourse (p. 372). That “cheating, scandals, drugs, violence, disrespect, and other inappropriate behaviors in sport have almost become expected or the norm” suggests sports have wandered away from instilling morality, ironically, to justifying immoral behavior in the name of winning (Doty, 2006, p. 1). Thus discourses of winning and sportsmanship interpenetrate in seemingly incompatible ways. Stahley and Boyd (2006) observe this paradox of values within the National Collegiate Athletic Association’s (NCAA) Stay in Bounds (SIB) program and their Hall of Champions (HOC). Both are geared toward youth and claim to promote sportsmanship and excellence through trying one’s best, which invokes the discourse of virtue (p. 319). However, despite the verbal messages about trying one’s best, the HOC repeatedly invoked discourses of winning and failed to include any champions (in the

HOC) that were not actual NCAA championship winners, which invoked the discourse of achievement. Although discourses of work ethic and sportsmanship are directly invoked as valued aspects of athlete identity, the enactment of that identity is illustrated through material champions and winners.

Coaches and athletes also invoke discourses of sportsmanship and work ethic. Often such discourses were animated by contradictory messages; such as encouraging a win mentality alongside messages of fun and enjoyment or promoting responsibility at the same time athletes are encouraged to ignore their physical limitations (Kassing & Barber, 2007; Kassing & Pappas, 2008). Messages of winning and enjoyment can coexist however, messages of winning were often more central than fun and enjoyment (Kassing & Barber). This tension was also present in intrapersonal communication. Tovaes (2010) examined how athletes create competing messages in their head with dual identities; often positioning the “self” as the weaker identity who feels the pain of the body and wants to stop, and the “sport” identity that berates the weaker identity with demeaning messages about ignoring the pain (p. 29). In these examples, the enactment of sport “concerns translating sport acts into moral and social lessons” (Kassing et al., p. 377). These lessons are largely underpinned by the discourse of winning at all cost and the underlying value of athletes who will do whatever it takes to win.

The literature reviewed in this section reveals the dynamic and dialectical constitution of identity as multiple and predominately competing discourses animate our understandings of virtue and achievement in cultural discourses of sport. In the next section, I draw on the literature to emphasize the relational implications of sport identity.

Relational Aspects of Sport Identity

Athletic participation can lead to a blurring of identity between parents and children. Coakley (2006) found parents of competitive youth participants “claimed moral worth” based on their children’s sport performance (p. 158). In other words, parents felt personally implicated by their child’s performance. Mean and Kassing (2007) also observed “talk and identity performance” at youth sporting events “were less about children and more about parent identities” (p. 42). Additionally there have been numerous instances where parents become involved in violent and sometimes fatal altercations at youth events as a result of this shared sense of identity (CNN, 2002; Conte, 2008). From the position of RDT, these studies illustrate how discourses of parenting and winning interpenetrate in the context of youth sports in ways that (con)fuse parent and child identity. The child’s performance speaks to a particular athlete identity such as captain, starter, back-up, or bench-warmer which ultimately ties back to the parental identity and its value in that context. In a previous study I conducted on sport related parent child communication, parents and athletes routinely discussed the complexity of parental politics in relation to identity and practice (Yandall, 2009). For example, one female basketball player explained how the parents of the starting players would segregate themselves from the parents of the non-starters. This display of social order illustrates not only to the value placed on the starting athletes but how that value is enacted by the communication practices of parents.

Shared identity is also apparent in sport relationships involving fans. In his reflections on fanship and social relations in sport, Gantz (2013) suggested “following

sports is a distinctly social phenomenon” (p. 178). Whether in the home, office, sports bars, or mediated online spaces fans seek to share their love of sports through a variety of channels, with friends, family, colleagues, and strangers. Research has underscored the significant emotional connections that fans feel toward teams, athletes, and issues in sport (Kassing & Sanderson, 2009; Lavelle, 2014; Mitrano, 1999; Trujillo & Krizek, 1994; Zagacki & Grano, 2005). Kraszewski (2008) considered “how displaced fans look to sports teams from their former places of residence as a way to understand home” (p. 141). His article begins with the funeral of James Henry Smith, a Pittsburgh native residing in San Diego, who arranged his funeral to take place as a regular Sunday afternoon watching the Steelers. Guests arrived at the funeral home to find James’ body dressed in his team pajamas, seated in a recliner to watch the game with his friends and family one last time. Fandom can also override legal and social transgressions, such as the fans remaining loyal to Kobe Bryant and Tiger Woods amidst rape and adultery charges. Additionally, in spite of the serious allegations suggesting Joe Paterno’s knowledge of the Jerry Sandusky child sex scandal, many loyal supporters of Paterno and Penn State football leapt to his defense (Bennett & Drehs, 2011). Mean (2014) examined the discursive maneuvering employed through the media to carefully protect the shared identities of Paterno and Penn State in relation to the Happy Valley community while distancing those identities from the sex scandal. Such examples demonstrate the deep personal and emotional connections fans feel toward teams and sports figures and speak to the importance of taking a relational approach to theorizing sport identity.

Through the literature in this section, I positioned sport identity as shared and relational. The on and off field actions of athletes connects to parents, friends and fans in deeply personal ways that complicate identity meaning and construction. Many people feel strong connections to teams through players and coaches they may never have met and in spite of significant social transgressions. Such connections speak to the importance of athlete identity and the far reaching social implications. In the following section, I examine literature that further demonstrates the complexity of sport identity through discourses of virtue that privilege certain identities and discourse of ownership that seek to control others.

Privileged Identities in Cultural Discourses

In this section I review literature that reveals how the previously discussed discourses of ownership, achievement, and virtue remain relevant in present day sport. Additionally, I will show that sport, although a space ripe with possibilities and potential for transformation, contesting social norms, and resistance is ultimately a space where narrow ideals of identity are privileged and vigilantly policed. Sport is uniquely a space that attracts fans through championing the Cinderella stories and the underdog. Sport enables a place where the unlikely hero can emerge against all odds. Through sport we observe athletes breaking through barriers of race, gender, class, and sexuality. Yet scholars continue to argue that sport has distinctly enabled reinforcement of gender difference, hegemonic masculinity, and heteronormativity (Kane, 1995; Messner, 1988; Lenskyj, 2012). My intention through this section is to draw attention to the discursive tensions I previously identified animating athlete identity and competition and

demonstrate how moments of resistance and transgression are heavily policed when achieved by athletes who are perceived as less virtuous, or deserving, based on their distance from American ideals of heteronormativity. These various but connected tensions give rise to identity and culture in sport.

A recent event in sports media exemplifies tensions arising within athlete identity. Following the 2014 AFC Championship game between the San Francisco 49ers and the Seattle Seahawks, a media frenzy erupted after an emotionally charged interview with Richard Sherman, cornerback for the Seahawks. Upon making the game winning play, and deflecting a would-be touchdown that ensured Seattle's victory, Sherman extended his hand to Michael Crabtree, the player he defended saying, "Hell of game. Hell of a game" (Davidson, 2014). Crabtree responded by grabbing Sherman's facemask and shoving him backward. Minutes later, in an on field interview, Sherman gave an animated response to Crabtree and millions of viewers through the camera. His "rant" elicited a social media explosion, with stunned viewers "calling him a gorilla, an ape or a thug from the ghetto" (Mungin & Almas, 2014). Petchesky (2014) stated that the word "thug" was uttered 625 times to describe Sherman on the day following the game and his now infamous interview. In a press conference following the game, Sherman apologized for his post-game performance taking away from the stellar play of his teammates on the field but did not apologize for his passionate outburst. He indicated that he acted like a player on the field just minutes after the dramatic conclusion of an emotionally charged game. Sherman then discussed his disappointment at the numerous racial comments and the repeated use of the word "thug" to describe his actions, saying "the reason it bothers

me is because it seems like it's an accepted way of calling somebody the N-word now" (Wilson, 2014). Sherman, who graduated from Stanford in just three years, also expressed his belief that the thug identity is something he has dealt with his whole life based on where he grew up.

The reaction to Sherman's post-game interview is one of many examples of the ongoing policing of identity in sport, and draws attention to the varying and complex discourses of identity that created meaning in this moment and for sports in general (Yandall, 2014). Speaking to this complexity and identity policing, Howard (2014) poignantly comments:

The league's best cornerback had made the best move of his career on the biggest play of his career to win the biggest game of his career, against an opposing wide receiver and college head coach with home he shares not a little bad blood. This was a triumphant moment, and still to a lot of people there was something viscerally *ugly* about Sherman standing over a pretty blonde woman, yelling into our living rooms with an emotional mixture of joy, relief, and excitement, arrogance, and anger. . . Millions of Americans took to their cell phones, to social media, to the bar patron next to them, to cluck at Sherman. We called him a monkey and a nigger. We threatened his life. We said that he set black people and race relations back 30, 50, 100 years. Because in that moment, Sherman—a singular kid from Compton who won both the athletic and intellectual lottery so completely, so authoritatively, that he spent three years playing on Stanford's football team at wide receiver before converting to defensive back and becoming the NFL's best at the position—was in the public eye. . . When you're a public figure, there are rules. Here's one: A public personality can be black, talented, or arrogant, but he can't be any more than two of these traits at a time. . . All this is based on the common, very American belief that black males must know their place, and more tellingly, that their place is somewhere different from that of whites. It's been etched into our cultural fabric that to act as anything but a loud harmless buffoon or an immensely powerful, yet humble servant is overstepping. (p. 1)

I quote Howard at length because he draws our attention specifically to Sherman's intersecting identities. In spite of his tremendous talent and the exemplary play of the

Seahawks, Howard argues that discourses of Sherman's race and emotion were centered in that moment while his education and physical performance were marginalized.

Tensions arose as discourses of identity constituting Sherman's perceived virtue in the interviews competed with discourses of his performance in relation to his achievement.

In this moment, his perceived virtue, or lack thereof, challenged and overshadowed his stellar performance, intellectual accomplishment, and physical dominance. Sport is supposed to provide a space where identity barriers fall at the feet of unprecedented talent and achievement. However, when discourses of virtue and achievement compete, we observe fluctuating shifts in discursive power that reveal the privileged identities within sport culture.

The literature reveals an overwhelming incidence of scrutiny across and within intersections of identity categories. Specifically, whiteness, affluence, and patriarchal ideals of heterosexuality and masculinity are privileged discourses in sport culture (Yandall, 2014). Media coverage of men's sports show heteronormative policing at the intersection of identities, particularly in regard to race, class, and masculinity. Halone (2008) draws our attention to racial framing in sport. For example, studies show how hegemonic masculinity reinforces whiteness in mediated depictions of sport (Butterworth, 2007; Trujillo, 1991). From online fan discussion of collegiate coach hiring practices, to mediated discussions of quarterbacks prior to the draft, to news media depictions of candidates in the home run race, the consistent framing of white masculinity as privileged reinforces heteronormativity (Butterworth, 2007; Mercurio & Filak, 2010; Sanderson, 2010). Scholars also highlight the criminalization of black masculinity

through mediated depictions of athletes and violence (Enck-Wanzer, 2009; Griffin & Calafell, 2011; Leonard, 2010). For example, in the aftermath of the sexual harassment charges of professional football quarterbacks Brett Favre, Ben Roethlisberger, and Michael Vick, online fan commentary revealed “whereas Favre and Roethlisberger remained raceless individuals, Vick carried for many a spoiled identity that fostered the reiteration of sincere factions about Blackness and provoked contentious conversations about racial politics in the United States today” (Leonard & King, 2011, p. 210).

Scholars also address the criminalization and disciplining of Black culture and masculinity through the NBA dress code (Calafell & Griffin, 2011; McDonald & Togli, 2010). NBA commissioner David Stern, in a statement reminiscent of the discourses of ownership and control that characterized the previously discussed labor relations in baseball, stated “If players are really going to have a problem, they will have to make a decision about how they want to spend their adult lives in terms of playing in the NBA or not” (Carter, 2005). Although the dress code issue was largely animated by discourses of professionalism, Calafell and Griffin argued that the policy was “symbolic of the desire to control and dilute the expression of blackness according to white norms (p. 128).” Situations like this speak to discourses of ownership and control over athlete’s bodies and identities when they wander outside of privileged identity boundaries. Discourses of race and masculinity are also tied to discourses of sexuality. Butterworth (2006) has argued that gender performances of hegemonic masculinity and overt homophobia are necessary in asserting heterosexuality in sport. Oates (2007) also observed the sexualization of

black male bodies in the NFL draft as a subversive tactic in the privileging of white masculinity.

Women continue to fight not only for equality in sport participation but also legitimacy. A recent study of professional female athletes found

in spite of practices that suggest the empowerment of women in and through sport, U. S. professional women athletes' identity construction remained subject to traditional gendered hegemony requiring the negotiation of heterosexuality and femininity. (Mean & Kassing, 2008, p. 141)

Female athletes who do not perform heterosexual femininity are subject to scrutiny and questioning regarding their sexuality (Harris, 2005) and may even be dismissed from their team based on perceived lesbian identity (Newhall & Buzuvis, 2008). On the field, women must also negotiate their legitimacy as athletes (Mean, 2001). Billings and Hundley (2010) asserted "entrenched notions of masculinity often result in less prominence and respect for women's sport" (p. 6). However, when women do display athletic ability that rivals men, both gender and sexuality come under scrutiny (Kane, 1995). For example, when eighteen-year-old Caster Semenya of South Africa turned heads with her record breaking times on the track, she was awarded with "gender testing" rather than applause (Zirin, 2013, p. 139). Crossing the sex divide to play men's sports has particularly violent implications. For example, when Katie Hnida joined the University of Colorado football team as a hopeful place kicker, she was immediately subject to verbal abuse and sexual assault on and off the practice field (Butterworth, 2008). These examples demonstrate that women are expected know their place and to project heterosexuality (Lenskyj, 2012) or be subject to questioning, discursive and/or physical harassment, and potential dismissal from the playing field.

The media also serves the privileging of heteronormativity by reporting on female athletes and sports in ways that subvert and sexualize (Duncan & Brummett, 1989; Mean, 2010; Zirin, 2013). While primarily absent from the sport press and media, when spoken of, female athletes are regularly dismissed, sexually objectified, or relegated to the punch line of a derogatory joke that is often sexual in nature (Messner, Duncan, & Cooky, 2003). Messner et al. posit that such findings demonstrate an assumption by the network about the heterosexual expectations of their audience who “do not want to see or hear any serious or respectful reporting of women’s sports” (p. 49). Mean (2010) found coverage of women’s soccer to privilege “hegemonic versions of femininity and/or heterosexuality” (p. 70). She further asserted media coverage to “undermine women’s identities as athletes, serving to protect masculinity” (p. 83). In an effort to discover why sport editors paid minimal attention to female athletes, Hardin (2005) surveyed 285 editors who were predominantly white and male (reflecting the reader demographics). Approximately one third believed women were “naturally less athletic” and one half believed that Title IX was unfair to men’s sports (p. 73).

The literature points to widespread and entrenched heteronormative beliefs embedded within discourses of identity in sport. We can observe discursive power rising when individuals step outside of their social place, such as in the case of Richard Sherman and Katie Hnida. The questioning of identity in sport uncovers power and privilege in identity. Discourses of ownership, virtue, and achievement compete as bodies are policed and subjugated in the effort to privilege narrow identity constructions.

Varying discourses are revealed as identities are policed according to varying discourses of virtue and achievement.

In this section I have drawn on literature that speaks to the many discourses that animate identity and culture in sport, specifically pointing to discourses of ownership, virtue, and achievement that continue to give rise to athlete identity through cultural discourses. In spite of the many identity boundaries perceived to be broken through outstanding sport performance, the literature demonstrates that athletes who do not fit into the privileged identity categories are subject to invasive scrutiny and are sought to be controlled. I now turn to the literature on collegiate sports, again reviewing literature that animates discourses of identity and culture.

Dialectical Tensions of Student-Athlete Identity in Collegiate Sport Culture

The identity and purpose of student-athletes has been hotly debated since the inception of intercollegiate sport competition. In spite of their public presence and regular appearances in popular culture and current affairs, student-athletes represent a population that is largely misunderstood. Generally perceived as over-privileged and academically challenged, many student-athletes face negative stereotypes and stigma within their campus communities (Jolly, 2008; Watson, 2006). The rights of student-athletes have garnered significant legal attention at present and over the past twenty years as many have lobbied for adequate injury restitution and compensation for the billions of dollars generated from their performance and branding (Branch, 2011). Yet the NCAA and institutions alike have denied such provisions under the idea that student-athletes are first and foremost students who participate in athletics as a peripheral activity to their

education. Because student-athletes are perceived as educationally centered, they do not enjoy the rights of employees as part of their athletic participation. In other words, they do not qualify for workers compensation when injured while playing for their respective universities, they have no rights to the revenue they generate, and they have no right to collectively assemble and negotiate their labor conditions. McCormick & McCormick (2006) argued that student-athletes are in fact employees in the eyes of the law and the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) based their substantial time commitment and the control coaches and universities exert over nearly every aspect of their daily lives. At the heart of this debate is the lingering question, are student-athletes primarily students or [employee] athletes? Is their collegiate experience educationally or athletically centered?

Student-athletes represent the heart of collegiate sport. In addition to discussions in current affairs, research over the past twenty years demonstrates ongoing discursive and dynamic tensions within collegiate sport, specifically with regard to student-athlete identity. Student-athletes are supposed to represent the intellectual and physical prowess of their respective universities. Yet, as early as 1929 the Carnegie Commission found commercialization, the growing big business of collegiate athletics, to be a significant issue specifically with regard to the student-athlete and “the diminishing of educational and intellectual values in general. . .” (cited in Yost, 2009, p. 40). Over fifty years later, studies continue to show a tension between academics and athletics for student-athletes in general (Purdy, Eitzen, & Hunagel, 1982; McCormick & McCormick, 2006; Svare, 2012; Yopyk & Prentice, 2005) and specifically for African-American student-athletes (Beamon & Bell, 2006; Edwards, 1985; Singer, 2009; Van Rheenen, 2012). Adler and

Adler (1985) and Branch (2011) have discussed the *structure* of collegiate sport as the underlying problem. The Adlers suggested that despite intentions for student-athletes at big-time sport universities to receive a solid education, the structure of athletic programs (e.g., visibility, commercialization) as well as the everyday experience of athletes within such programs ironically “undermine [student-athletes] attainment of the professed goals of the educational system” (p. 241). The Adlers also found that student-athletes predominately entered the university with strong academic goals. Conversely, non-athlete undergraduates generally hold negative perceptions of student-athletes’ academic interest and competence (Engstrom & Sedlacek, 1991; Knapp, Rasmussen, & Barnhart, 2001). The tensions between academics and athletics within student-athlete identity are not limited to the athletic community but affect the greater university community.

The majority of the literature presents conflicting perceptions of student-athletes and their role in higher education. Collegiate athletes are, by default, role models. They serve as representatives of their respective universities, ambassadors of their former high schools, and are highly visible on campus and in their local and larger communities. In addition to their visibility, athletes receive benefits such as scholarships and added support services. However, the student population and a portion of faculty largely question their status as *student*-athletes and deserving beneficiaries of the privileges they receive (Simons et al., 2007). For example, faculty at a large eastern university held suspicious or negative attitudes toward male athletes in regards to grades, special athlete services, and recognition in the student newspaper (Engstrom, Sedlacek, & McEwan, 1995). Athletes themselves are aware of negative perceptions from both faculty and non-

athlete students. In a study of 538 collegiate athletes, only 15% felt they were perceived in a positive manner (Simons et al., 2007). While the idea is that the benefits athletes receive represent a fair compensation for their service to the university, it is apparent that this idea is not widely accepted by the greater university community. In his discussion of the college sports reform movement, Benford (2007) presented a variety of examples of how such benefits are exploited and the lengths athletics programs will go to protect their winning athletes and teams. McGee (2011) cited over a dozen programs recently punished for violations such as improper benefits, unethical conduct, and lack of institutional control. These occurrences suggest that there may be good reason for faculty and students' negative perceptions toward athletes.

On the other side of the table, the literature also demonstrates that student-athletes face significant challenges above and beyond that of their fellow classmates with minimal support (Watson, 2006). Although student-athlete identity is generally perceived as a privileged status, research shows that many student-athletes perceive negative associations surrounding their identity (Harrison et al., 2009; Stone et al., 2012; Yopyk & Prentice, 2005). Studies also suggest that athletic participation hinders the academic experience, especially for those participating in high revenue sports (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011; Jolly, 2008; Purdy et al., 1982; Svare, 2012). For example, Singer (2008) found athletes in a DI football program

viewed the term student-athlete as an inappropriate label and an inaccurate depiction of who they are, especially given that the inordinate amount of time that they were expected to devote to football served as a detriment to their over-all educational development. (p. 402)

Research also showed particularly negative associations between African-American athletes and their student identity because of heavy and intentional sport socializations (Beamon & Bell 2002, 2006). Specifically, these young men believed sport represented their only hope for professional success.

Much of the discussion and tension surrounding student-athletes is animated by the term *student-athlete*. Former NCAA executive director Walter Byers has revealed that the term student-athlete was devised specifically to dispel perceptions of the student-athlete as an employee and relinquish work-related employer responsibility by focusing on the centrality of their academic focus (Byers, 1995). Grounded in this intentional categorization, academic institutions have long clung to the notion of the student-athlete who is always a dedicated student first while athletic participation is secondary. By upholding this education-centered depiction of student-athletes, we are led to believe that academic institutions and the NCAA have student-athletes best interest at heart and privilege their education and *student* identity first. However, the repeated and ongoing incidence of academic impropriety dating back to the first inter-collegiate competition suggests otherwise (Yost, 2009). The regularity of impropriety along with the ease with which it is smoothed over by institutions, on the contrary, suggests that academic fraud is not scandalous but “considered a part of doing business at the highest levels of college athletics” (Svare, 2012, p. 2). However, in spite of the big business of college sports and the billions of dollars made by academic institutions and the NCAA, both continue to privilege the discourse of *amateurism* when discussions of the rights of student-athletes arise.

Over the past few years, the “myth of the student-athlete” has garnered significant public and legal discussion (McCormick & McCormick, 2006, p. 71). As incidents of student-athletes attempting to make money (on the QT) continue to arise, the business of collegiate sport has come under scrutiny and debate. The NCAA and institutions continue to uphold the idea of the academically focused student-athlete whose athletic participation merely supports the educational experience. Arguments that student-athletes are deserving of at least some of the billions generated from their performance are consistently met with the same two responses. First, the act of paying student-athletes would destroy collegiate athletics. Second, student-athletes use their athletic competition as a means to higher education and are thus appropriately paid through academic scholarships. The first response is not only convenient for the current beneficiaries of collegiate competition (i.e., NCAA and Institutions) but strikingly reminiscent of the “it’s a game not business” ruse from the early days of baseball. Protecting collegiate sport somehow supersedes protecting the student-athletes rights or current lack thereof. The second response leads to the present project. The basic premise upholding the current state of collegiate sport supports the idea that student-athletes are indeed educationally centered students first who use athletics as a secondary means to receive higher education.

Considerable research challenges the incumbent notion of student-athlete identity and suggests that the big time collegiate sport environment overwhelmingly supports the *athlete* over the *student* in contrast to the arguments of institutions and the NCAA (Adler & Adler, 1985; Branch, 2011; McCormick & McCormick, 2006; Purdy et al., 1982;

Svare, 2012). Specifically, research argues that sport dominates the student-athlete experience and that the structure of collegiate sport impedes academic engagement. Additionally, as student-athletes attempt to assert labor rights based on their significant workload and the billions of dollars accrued from their labor, the NCAA has continued to contend that student-athletes have no basis to lobby for labor rights nor to organize and collective bargain on their behalf because they are not employees (Wolverton, 2014). Discourses of ownership relating back to baseball labor relations abound in this ongoing predicament, as the NCAA claims that academic compensation is not only in the best interest of the student-athletes but also collegiate sport. They further use the value and focus of education say student-athletes have no rights regarding their athletic participation because it's just a game for them. As student-athletes have fought to assert labor rights based on the employment-like nature of their participation, the NCAA and institutions focus the issue on the ails of paying students to overshadow the other significant issues on the table such as medical compensation and further academic support. Current legal arguments made on behalf of student-athletes that appear to effectively debunk the idea that student-athletes are not employees potentially indicate a change of direction in this longtime debate (McCormick & McCormick, 2006).

Research and current events involving student-athletes point to a dynamic and dialectical discursive environment where the meanings at the heart of collegiate sport are continuously contested and challenged. There is little evidence of progress toward compromise or understanding between the discursive battles of varying conceptualizations of the student-athlete experience. Given that a consensus of sorts

appears improbable, I believe taking a dissensus approach to student-athlete identity and reform could prove productive.

CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

Toward A Critical Relational Approach:

Envisioning Action and Social Justice through Method

In order to take an in-depth look at the dynamic and dialectical ways student-athlete identity and collegiate sport culture are discursively constructed through the everyday practices of community members, I employed an ethnographic approach to facilitate the utility of the study results for community members as well as further the development of sport curriculum to improve understanding of collegiate sport culture and open communicative space to challenge its structure (Kemmis, 2008). Adler and Adler (1985) argued that the ethnographic approach is important in “reveal[ing] the factors and processes” that influence the relationship between athletic participation and academic performance (p. 242). Additionally, as I seek to understand student-athlete identity as relationally constituted through “deeply cultured communication processes,” I heed Baxter’s (2011) suggestion that expertise in cultural communication codes should come from “immersion” in the literature or the community using ethnographic methods (p. 155). While there is a considerable body of research on collegiate sport, in-depth, ethnographic accounts are sparse (Martin et al., 2010), potentially a result of the difficulty

of accessing collegiate and professional sport spaces (Adler & Adler). This method also positioned me to conceptualize and begin conversations about cultural tensions within the community while I conducted the research. An ethnographic study not only adds to the literature but also provides the necessary approach to observe the enactment of student-athlete identity through everyday practices embedded in collegiate sport culture.

In chapter one, I pointed out that I view advocacy for student-athletes as an avenue of social justice. Given the enormous amount of control exerted over them, their youth and immaturity in light of the responsibilities they shoulder on a very public stage, and the many rights they are denied in spite of their actual and perceived privileges, student-athletes are a diverse, underrepresented, and largely misunderstood group. Although power and control may appear overt within collegiate sport, I am equally interested in the subtle manifestations that have enabled certain untoward practices to become entrenched. In the spirit of social justice, along with the research questions guiding this study I also consider whose interests are being served through this research, seek to actively engage and challenge dominant structures that perpetuate injustice, and commit to privileging voices and discourses that have been excluded (Frey et al., 1996, p. 111). Conquergood (1995) argued “as engaged intellectuals we understand that we are entangled within world systems of oppression. . . our choice is to stand alongside or against domination, but not outside, above, or beyond it (p. 85). Social justice sensibility (Frey et al., 1996) and praxis (Conquergood, 1995) guide this approach with a clear intention for action both through and from the research.

I designed this project to incorporate critical and interpretive methods to support my meta-theoretical commitments and to contribute to further scholarship across critical and interpretive paradigms. Commenting on the need for reflexivity in interpersonal studies, Foster (2008) encouraged more “sophisticated methods of research and theory building that take into account advancements made by critical theorists” (p. 98). While relational dialectics theory is conceptualized from some perspectives as a critical theory based on its attention to power, it does not necessarily account for my positionality or call for reflexivity throughout the methodological and analytic stages of the project (Berry & Clair, 2011a, b). Berry and Clair (2011a) asserted

We are, at our core, ethnographic selves uniquely crafting stories about culture, a creative process intrinsically connected to the multidimensional call of ethnographic reflexivity. We are storied selves entangled with others’ stories, our understandings of their stories, and their understandings of ours. (p. 95)

Ethnography is not solely a means of collecting stories and data but an awareness of becoming part of the story, and therefore, the data. Reflexivity represents accountability to this awareness and actively acknowledging, through the ethnographic telling, that the presence of the researcher impacts the story, the data, and the interpretation (Berry, 2011). Given that the discourse of researcher positionality has largely been marginalized in interpersonal studies, I choose to bring this discourse to the center in the proposed project. Bringing marginalized discourses to the center is one way that RDT enables action and social change (Baxter, 2011). To accomplish this goal, I have combined contrapuntal analysis and ethnography, weaving researcher subjectivity and reflexivity into the analysis.

Social justice, subjectivity, and positionality. My interest in pursuing critical and relational scholarship combines my enthusiasm for relational communication with my desire to actively work with and alongside communities to contribute to social change through scholarship. I have been involved with sport as an active community member for the majority of my life, as an athlete, coach, athletic trainer, and team manager, for example. My personal experience, passion for and commitment to sport in general and collegiate sport in particular cannot be separated from this research. In their discussion of social justice oriented research, Frey and colleagues (1996) emphasized the necessity for fundamental changes in the research process, including a paradigmatic shift in theory, method, and researcher positionality. They asserted “The social justice sensibility does not even pretend to be objective, neutral, or dispassionate, even though these are among the most important virtues identified by the dominant discourse in research methodology texts” (p. 115). They concurred with Conquergood (1995) who stated:

The choice is no longer between pure and applied research. Instead we must choose between research that is “engaged” or “complicit.” By engaged I mean clear-eyed, self-critical awareness that research does not proceed in epistemological purity or moral innocence: There is no immaculate perception. Engaged individuals take responsibility for how the knowledge they produce is used instead of hiding behind pretenses and protestations of innocence. . . . (p. 85)

Thus, while the dominant discourses support a detached and often disembodied researcher position, there are competing discourses that support an embodied and engaged researcher whose experience, values, and passion become part of the research. I acknowledge that I have a personal and professional stake in the collegiate sport community and this project. I strive to be reflexive about my ideas and beliefs and how I came to this research and this space, but do not attempt to set them aside. My personal

connection to sport fuels my research interests and is relevant to my decisions through designing this project and analyzing the data.

Answering the call from Frey et al. (1996), I designed this project with fundamental shifts in theory, method, and researcher positionality. I first engaged in rigorous theoretical development (Condit, 2009) by combining critical and interpretive perspectives in data collection and analysis. I believe this combination will facilitate theorizing new possibilities in collegiate sport culture and enable potential to “intervene into discourses” and make a difference *through* research for the purpose of social change (Frey, 2009, p. 212). Working within the community with the goal of service enables me to observe the workings of power through practice and consider, from the perspective of community members, how and where discursive intervention might be most effective and appropriate. I also choose to “embed” myself within the community and “shed the perspective of impartiality and a detached stance” through both method and analysis (Seeger, 2009, p. 17). Based on this immersion and personal connection, I am mindful of my positionality.

Because RDT does not necessarily account for researcher positionality through analysis, I bring in additional perspectives to acknowledge that who I am within the space and how my body and presence are read by community members is significant to both my interactions and my interpretation of those interactions. Calafell and Moreman (2009) emphasized the importance of personal voice, self-reflexivity, and subjectivity in ethnographic work in fleshing out the experience of the Other and theorizing “upon larger social and cultural practices” (p. 53). Reflexive ethnography stories the cultural space

through the interaction of the researcher and community members encountered while reflecting on social and cultural structures that influence interaction (Clair, 2011).

Through this project, I shift from traditional interpretive methods to follow Madison (2005) in bringing theory and method together through ethnography (p. 13).

Weaving researcher positionality into the analysis draws attention to some of the discursive social conditions and power structures that are marginalized within the space.

I will now discuss how the design of the current project meets the topical, theoretical, and methodological criteria I have set forth.

Method

The setting of the project took place in the university athletic department of a medium sized, Western private university where I served as an intern. The university was predominately white and middle-upper to upper-class with an average annual household income of \$150,000. The economic demographics of this institution enabled a policy requiring all incoming freshman to have a laptop computer. The athletic department and varsity sports reflected this privileged demographic, featuring a variety of what can be considered boutique or country club sports—sports whose participation often require a considerable monetary investment and access to specialized facilities. For example, while football and baseball can be played almost anywhere with various types of official or hodge-podge equipment, sports such as golf, gymnastics, skiing, and hockey require significant funds for equipment and facilities to enable participation. The university hosts ten Division I programs (basketball, golf, hockey, gymnastics, lacrosse,

skiing, soccer, swimming & diving, tennis, volleyball) in the Western Athletic Conference and approximately 315 student-athletes.

My role enabled me to embed myself within the everyday space and practice of collegiate sport. In order to observe student-athlete identity within collegiate athletics and become an active member of the community, I secured a position as an intern with Student Athlete Support (SAS) through the athletic director and the director of SAS. I discuss this process in detail in chapter four. I spent two academic years and approximately 1000 hours, 20-35 hours per week for the first year and 5-10 hours per week the following year, performing various duties and attending events within the athletic department. I oversaw study hall, which involved monitoring student-athletes, logging and recording study-hall hours, and communicating with coaches regarding which student-athletes had completed their hours as well as behavior issues (i.e., following the study hall rules). I also managed student-athletes tutors, including reviewing tutor applications, setting up and interviewing potential tutors, completing hiring paperwork, reviewing policy with tutors, maintaining the tutor database, and assigning and managing tutor assignments. I assisted with student-athlete advising for a ten-day period each quarter. Advising involved meeting with students individually to review their academic progress report, discuss major/minor options, look at progress toward major/minor requirements, and determine course options for the following quarter while factoring in practice/season schedule. I also had the opportunity to talk with students about graduate school and career options.

I additionally oversaw book compliance in the university bookstore, which took place for one week at the start of fall, winter, and spring quarters, to ensure that student-athletes on book scholarships received their books under the terms and conditions stipulated by the NCAA. Clerically, I alphabetized and organized receipts and records for ease of book returns (e.g., added and dropped courses) and file management documenting NCAA compliance. Finally, I assisted the assistant director of SAS with FYT (first year transition), a program implemented by the athletic department for incoming first year students and outgoing seniors. FYT is geared toward orienting new student-athletes to their responsibilities as students and athletes in addition to discussing issues such as study habits, time management, cheating, hazing, and substance abuse. The senior program is geared toward graduation, financial management, resume building, networking, career choice and the job market. The freshman program ran every week for ten weeks during the fall quarter. I assisted in the development of program material and attended each session. I led the lecture and discussion periodically over the course of the program and was asked to prepare and lead the discussion on values and goal setting. The senior program was less structured and consisted of a series of lectures and events over the course of the year. I assisted in the planning and implementation of these lectures and events and attended, though in a behind-the-scenes role (e.g., reserving and setting up rooms, making copies, taking attendance and handing out name tags).

In addition to these specific duties, I performed a variety of tasks on a daily basis such as making copies, hanging posters, helping staff members in other departments with projects, overseeing work-study students, and attending meetings (e.g., coaches meetings,

internal/external operations meetings, student-athlete advisory board meetings). I also attended and assisted with various preparations for athletic department events throughout out the year. Finally, my boss regularly gave assignments or engaged me in conversations that she felt were leadership or skill building. For example, she once handed me a listing of all athletic department employees and told me I needed to fire ten employees and justify my decisions. This was a hypothetical situation meant to help me understand the challenges and financial decisions faced senior staff due to budget cuts and restructuring.

Participants

Based on my daily activities, the community members I encountered the most were those directly involved with student-athlete support services. I worked closely with my boss, who is the director of SASS, and the assistant director of SASS. I regularly interacted with student-athletes, coaches, NCAA compliance staff, food and beverage staff, students with work-study positions in the athletics department, and various other interns that worked throughout the department. To a lesser degree, I interacted with the athletic director and her support staff, events staff, building staff, and internal/external operations staff.

Procedure

I used my role as an intern in SASS to conduct a critical ethnography within the collegiate sport community. I took detailed field notes of my everyday experience as a member of SASS. Because I did not collect any identifying information nor did I act

outside of my role as intern, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) cleared my study as not needing IRB approval.

During the internship, I was often on my computer to perform various duties, such as those detailed in the previous section. I also took this time to jot down notes of my observations throughout each day. At the end of each day, I reflected on my notes and wrote up more detailed field notes once outside of the space (Goodall, 2004). I have 150 single-spaced pages of field notes detailing the hours of ethnographic work within my setting. I analyzed my field notes through several processes in order to answer my research questions in line with the methodological approach I described earlier.

Data Analysis

In order to incorporate both critical and interpretive approaches and answer the research questions, the data analysis occurred on two levels: contrapuntal analysis and ethnographic analysis. Contrapuntal analysis (Baxter, 2011) is a type of discourse analysis that involves looking at a text to locate competing discourses and examine how meaning is constructed through the interplay of those discourses. My ethnographic analysis was also an interpretive method; however, it highlights researcher subjectivity and positionality through the ethnographic telling of the study as well as the data analysis (Madison, 2005). Although RDT does not directly discuss researcher positionality as part of the analytic process, it supports the disruption of power by de-centering dominant discourses. In this case, researcher subjectivity and positionality are marginalized discourses in interpersonal communication studies. Thus, using RDT enables me to disrupt dominant discourses through method and data analysis through this project. As I

work to bring critical and interpretive analytical processes together by weaving the contrapuntal analysis within the ethnographic telling and analysis, I also strive to answer calls for paradigmatic hybridity (Baxter, 2012; Frey et al., 1996). First, I discuss the ethnographic analysis.

Critical ethnographic orientation. Through the ethnographic analysis, I described my experience as an intern within the everyday experience and practice of collegiate sport. Guided by a critical ethnographic perspective (Madison, 2005) and the use of subjectivity (Calafell & Moreman, 2009), “I understand the importance of using personal experience, body knowledge, and reflection to bear upon my history and theorizations” of this space (Calafell, 2005, p. 53). Madison (2005) asserted:

Positionality is vital because it forces us to acknowledge our own power, privilege, and biases just as we denounce the power structures that surround our subjects. A concern for positionality is a reflexive ethnography; it is a turning back on ourselves. When we turn back on ourselves, we examine our intentions, our methods, and our possible effects. We are accountable for our research paradigms, our authority, and our moral responsibility relative to representation and interpretation. (p. 14)

Put another way, I offered my ethnographic experience and analysis through a personal narrative in which I used thick description and reflexivity to detail what I observed, the choices I made, the politics of my body and identity within the space, and how I interpreted the data (Clair, 2011; Geertz, 1973).

In her reflexive ethnography, Clair (2011) crafted a rhetorical analysis of her experience with a small family farm. Drawing on Bahktin’s (1990) dialectical and dialogic perspectives she looked at the ways in which family members discursively constructed identity and identification. She asserted that her writing “allowed thick

description and reflexivity to help make sense of the ways in which identities are constructed and performed on a daily basis” (p. 125). Additionally critical and reflexive ethnography enables the researcher to consider all that is expressed, whether spoken or unspoken. The unspoken can point to “the complex, dialectical and sometimes paradoxical aspects of silence and voice” (Clair, 1998, p. 187). Clair (2011) elaborated, “In those silences, one can hear the voices of our unspoken identities. Reflecting on what is unspoken, what is left undone, what is missing is crucial to gathering a complete interpretation of any culture or any person” (pp. 119-120). Thus the ruminations and reflexive observations of the ethnographer become integral to the analysis of what is unsaid. Critical approaches to ethnography are specifically oriented to discover the political and ideological underpinnings of culture and practice (Conquergood, 1991; Trujillo, 1993). Silence can be indicative of dominant discourses at work. This is particularly salient to the culture of collegiate sport where the positions of athletes and staff are precarious at best. Student-athletes can lose their scholarships for any number of violations and entire coaching staffs can be terminated at a moment’s notice. Given this instability, issues of power likely arise through the unspoken aspects of the everyday experience in addition to what is said.

Ethnographic and reflexive methodology contribute to RDT where traditional discourse analysis cannot. RDT is rooted in Bakhtin’s emphasis on the importance of the other. Ethnography enables a physical and organic presence and relationship with others that is not achievable through interviews, analysis of written words, or recorded talk.

It is paying attention to “being with” in body-to-body *presence* with Others. . . . You not only do what the subject does, but you are intellectually, relationally and

emotionally invested in their symbol making practices and social strategies as you experience with them a range of yearnings and desires. . . . This is not a romantic or self-sacrificing absorption with Otherness, it is the tension that is at the center of the dialogue. (Madison, 2006, p. 323)

Such an orientation is indicative of an ethical commitment to viewing the other as a whole person, situated within a complex contextual and ideological space. The tension Madison acknowledges arises from the dialogue between self and other in the moment. Because the ethnographer is part of what is happening at the time of observation, the subject is other to the ethnographer at the same time the ethnographer is other to the subject. I found this view to be particularly relevant to my position as an intern. There were many times when I was helped to see that my position in the space was being interpreted much differently than I thought. These revelations were imperative to gaining a clearer picture of the discursive culture and my impact. As I discuss in the analysis, my impact on the space has important implications beyond my personal experience to other ethnographers or action researchers who desire to become active members of communities while also conducting research.

Ethnographic analysis. To conduct my ethnographic analysis, I first engaged in several thorough readings of my field notes. I began coding by organizing “clumps” of relevant data together (Glense, cited in Madison, 2005, p. 36). I separated the notes by practice (i.e., advising, tutoring, study hall, textbooks, FYT), descriptions of the practices, my experience, and thoughts about my experience. I then looked for clusters of ideas within and across those categories. Once I felt comfortable with the clumps and clusters of organized ideas, I pulled out the major themes reflected in my data. From there, I created a visual map to show the “connections, hierarchies, and distinctions” within the

data (Madison, p. 37). From the themes and visual map, I focused on creating an ethnographic narrative of my experience as an intern that moved between thick description and reflexivity (Clair, 2011). In this process, I focused on the practices through my everyday experience as a staff member rather than the discourses. Discourses arose organically through my experience as I considered my priorities and responsibilities as a member of staff. I asked the following questions, “What do my various duties make me accountable for?” “What actions are questioned?” “What duties are prioritized?” “How is my performance evaluated?” These questions not only helped to define my staff role in relation to student-athletes but also to observe how discourses arose through the practices via my role. This ethnographic analysis contextualized both my experience and the contrapuntal analysis while describing a detailed account of daily collegiate athletic practices.

Relational dialectics orientation. In her most recent articulation of RDT, Baxter (2011) urged interested scholars to move beyond simply identifying dialectics to situating discursive struggles within the utterance chain as well as theorizing the interplay of competing discourses. Contrapuntal analysis, by definition, aims to focus on discursive interplay at the point(s) of contradiction. Recent RDT scholarship has answered her call (Baxter et al., 2012; Harrigan & Miller-Ott, 2013; Norwood & Baxter, 2011; Simmons et al., 2013; Stephenson-Abetz, 2012; Stephenson-Abetz & Holman, 2012; Suter et al., 2014). However, there remains ample space to build on the quality work here and continue to expand our understandings of dialectical struggles in relationships as well as the utility of RDT. The bulk of the RDT literature, past and present, involves family

communication and relationships. Several recent studies have explored new avenues of relational dialectics such as the mediating influence of Facebook as college students transition between old and new relationships (Stephenson-Abetz & Holman, 2012), the experience of African-American college students in predominantly white universities (Simmons et al. 2013), and the issues of multivocality and power imbalance in action research within an acute care setting (Hynes, Coughlan, & McCarron 2012). The current project adds to the literature as I focus on discursive interplay at various points of the utterance chain through the constitution of student-athlete identity.

In regard to researcher subjectivity, the RDT literature largely reflects a distanced researcher position. Two recent studies acknowledged the researcher(s) as an important factor in the research and analysis process, yet the scholars chose not to use personal voice or share their reflexive experience of the process (Baxter et al. 2012; Stephenson-Abetz, 2012). Faulkner (2012) used personal narrative to discuss her experience of pregnancy as she negotiated dominant cultural discourses and gave voice to marginalized discourses; however, she did not reflexively elaborate on her embodied experience of those competing discourses. This project expands the literature to incorporate reflexive methods of critical theorists in order to examine and consider an embodied experience of negotiating discursive interplay. Additionally, this project also adds to several studies demonstrating the practical utility of RDT (Harrigan & Miller-Ott, 2013; Hynes, Coughlan, & McCarron, 2012; Simmons et al., 2013).

Discourse analysis represents the guiding analytical framework of RDT and contrapuntal analysis. Although the bulk of RDT involves analysis of interviews,

recorded talk, and written texts such as letters, diaries, and blogs, Baxter (quoting Tracy, 2001) reminds us that discourse analysis is “best understood as a field of research rather than a single practice” and involves the “close study of language in use” through a variety of texts (p. 152). This project departs from previous studies and adds to the literature by conceptualizing the unit of analysis a bit differently. In my effort and commitment to pursue this project as part of the community, I sought approval directly from the athletic director. She was very wary of the term research (which I discuss in the analysis) and explicitly asked me not to conduct interviews or collect data in any way that could be considered disruptive to the already busy lives of the student-athletes or that fell outside of my duties as an intern. While this may seem like a negative blow to my theoretical orientation, I have come to see it as a blessing in disguise. First, I was afforded the opportunity to think creatively about collecting and analyzing my data. Second, it became increasingly clear to me that the majority of student-athletes and staff tended to be paranoid, and rightly so, about what they discussed and with whom. This suspicion was confirmed at a regional NCAA conference I attended where support staff from varying institutions discussed that the problems that students voiced in the confines of their respective offices were not reflected in annual end of the year surveys. Therefore, I concluded that collecting data through interviews (which would have been my preferred method along with the ethnography) was not the best option for the project at this point in time. I felt confident in designing the present study with the intention of laying the groundwork for future efforts.

My analysis focused on the official language of established practices that oriented the everyday experience of student-athletes through the NCAA and institution as well as the enactment of those practices through everyday implementation. This effort is similar to Schrodts et al. (2006) in their analysis of stepfamilies negotiating the divorce decree (i.e., legal document stipulating terms of divorce). Schrodts and colleagues discuss how families engage in meaning making as they enact the legal terms of the divorce decree in their daily lives. Through the current project, my analysis works between the written texts that explicate specific everyday practices (i.e., study hall, tutoring, textbooks, advising, FYT), some associated with legal and binding terms defined by the NCAA and/or university, and the enactment of those practices by both student-athletes and staff.

Contrapuntal analysis. Contrapuntal analysis involves three steps: identify the text, identify competing discourses in the text, and identify the interplay of discourses through which meaning is made in the text (Baxter, 2011). Usually contrapuntal analysis focuses on talk because that is where competing discourses are invoked and meaning arises. Through this project I identify discourses invoked through the language of the official NCAA and institution manuals. I also present everyday practices within the structure of collegiate sport as textual, meaning-making objects through which discourses were invoked (Baxter, 2012, personal communication). Through my ethnographic observations, I discuss discourses within the official statements of the practices (i.e., through NCAA or university) as well as those that arose during the enactment of the practices. The practices I observed include: study hall, advising, tutoring, book compliance, and the first year transition program.

After thoroughly describing and situating the everyday practices through my ethnographic analysis, I analyzed the practices to identify the discourses. In order to locate the discourses, I followed the six-step thematic analysis process detailed by Braun and Clarke (2006) and suggested by Baxter (2011). I began by familiarizing myself with the data through several thorough readings of my field notes and direct textual presentations of the practices via the Student-Athlete and NCAA manuals. I looked at the manuals first and created initial coding categories by asking “What is being said or implied about collegiate sport and student-athlete identity?” After identifying the initial coding categories, I reviewed the codes to locate the discourses by re-coding for ways of knowing and systems of meaning. I sought to answer the following broad analytic questions: “What is the meaning of collegiate sport? What is the meaning of student-athlete? What is the meaning of student-athlete support staff? What is the meaning of the student-athlete/support staff relationship?” These questions assist in thematically organizing data to facilitate discourse identification (Baxter, 2011). In order to identify discourses invoked silently through the everyday processes of practice, I asked “What do staff members and student-athletes need to know to make the practices intelligible? What sociocultural and interpersonal discourses need to be invoked to understand the practices? (Baxter, 201, p. 159). In order to answer the second research question which involves structure, rather than RDT, I also asked “What is the relationship between discourses of student-athlete identity and the structures of signification?” Next I reviewed the themes for validity against the original data and the themes from ethnographic analysis. Finally, I named the themes and pulled exemplars to explicitly identify the discourses.

Competing discourses are generally revealed through the use of *discursive markers* that either “*counter, negate, or entertain* a system of meaning” (Norwood & Baxter, 2011, p. 206). The discursive markers signify the presence of one or more discourses and the ways in which they interact in the text. Negating demonstrates the recognition of a competing discourse in order to reject it (Baxter, 2011, p. 167). Countering involves the positioning of two discourses that take on different meanings through the use of conjunctions and connectives such as *although, however, but, yet, nonetheless*. Whereas negating and countering highlight the competition between discourses, entertaining demonstrates that the alternative discourse is being considered through the use of words and phrases such as *may, might, must, could* or *it’s possible, it’s likely, apparently*.

My contrapuntal analysis departed from established analytical practices because discursive struggle primarily arose between policy and practice. I conceptualized the stated policy and the practice of that policy as a single utterance because the language is intended to define the practice. For example, discourses invoked through the official statements pertaining to academic advising should match the discourses invoked through the practice of advising because the policy describes the practice and impetus for the practice. I identified discursive struggle occurring when the discourses arising through the policy did not match the discourses arising through the practice of that policy. After identifying and describing the discourses, I determined which discourses were *dialogically contractive*, denied the presence of multiple perspectives, and which were *dialogically expansive*, enabled multiple perspectives (Baxter, 2011). In order to

distinguish the discourses as dialogically contractive or expansive, I asked “does this discourse privilege one voice or include multiple voices (Baxter, 2011, p. 173)?” In order to determine the nature of the interplay, I asked how the discourses identified through corresponding policy and practice were positioned in relation to one another by considering if they countered, negated, or entertained one another.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Overview of Results & Analyses

The purpose of my project was to gain a greater understanding of student-athlete identity within the complexity of collegiate sport culture. I chose to approach this objective by looking at the dialectical discourses that animate student-athlete identity and how the interpenetration of multiple discourses gave rise to varying meanings. In response to reformers who have argued that the roots of corruption and scandal stem from within the structure of collegiate sports, I also looked at the relationship between student-athlete identity and the structures that constituted collegiate sport. In order to meet my objectives I posed three research questions:

RQ1. What are the competing discourses that animate student-athlete identity through everyday collegiate sport practices and how does their interplay constitute the meaning(s) of student-athlete identity?

RQ2. How do the competing discourses invoke the structures within collegiate sport culture?

RQ3. How can the interpenetration of competing discourses that construct student-athlete identity inform community members in efforts to (re)develop everyday practices?

In this chapter, I address my research questions through the results of both my ethnographic and contrapuntal analyses. To answer the questions, I first provide an overview of the dialectics I observed animating student-athlete identity within my everyday experience of collegiate sport culture. Given my mixed methods and analyses, I have organized each section to clarify how I am moving between my analytic orientations. In each section, I first discuss my ethnographic analysis, working between thick description and reflexivity, detailing the everyday practices as encountered through my experience as a member of student-athlete support (SAS) while considering the implications of my position within the culture. I address research question one throughout the ethnographic analysis by speaking specifically to how the everyday practices invoked various discourses and dialectics of student-athlete identity. Next, I continue to speak to RQ1 as I identify and explain the discourses and dialectics according to relational dialectics theory. RQ2 asks how competing discourses of identity invoke the structure of collegiate sport. Through the ethnographic analysis, I discuss my findings that the structure, through the processes of the everyday practices, actually invoked discourses of student-athlete identity. After thoroughly explaining the practices and identifying the discourses and dialectics I discuss my contrapuntal analysis to address RQ1 and RQ3. I draw from the ethnographic analysis and presentation of discourses and dialectics to consider the discursive interplay in relation to student-athlete identity (RQ1)

and informing community members to (re)develop everyday practices (RQ3). Second, the act of paying student-athletes would destroy collegiate athletics. To conclude the chapter, I speak directly to the research questions in light of the findings.

Review of Mixed Methods

I endeavored to incorporate critical perspectives into my ethnographic and contrapuntal analyses to provide a clearer and more nuanced understanding of the complexity of student-athlete identity, structure, and collegiate sport culture. I believe the combination of methods and theories employed here assist in productively addressing why over a century of reform efforts have failed to inspire lasting change (Benford, 2007). Specifically, my findings show how the multiple and competing discourses that constitute student-athlete identity illuminate ongoing issues in collegiate sport as well as identifying an important link between identity and structure. I further demonstrate how enactment (Kassing et al., 2004) adds to the RDT literature in illuminating synchronic interplay, or the simultaneous invocation of competing discourses, when discourses invoked through official policies and statements competed with discourses invoked through the enactment of those policies. Throughout my analysis, I strove to be mindful and reflexive about my position and values going into the internship. I also endeavored to be ethical and sensitive of the human bodies and community I encountered through my experience. The nature of employment within athletic departments is extremely volatile and positions can be cut or restructured at anytime without warning or notice. Thus, I focused my analysis on the structural implications of student-athletes and collegiate sport culture rather than the individuals. Based on the strict and heavily regulated culture of

collegiate athletics, staff members were very much extensions of the culture and structure itself regardless of their individual personas. For example, as a staff member, I found it imperative to guard many of my personal thoughts and beliefs, because they could lead to trouble for staff or student-athletes. The precarious nature of employment within athletic departments puts everyone at risk when any type of research is done. Because I hope to continue working within and gathering important information about athletic departments, I strove to be conscious of the vulnerability of bodies throughout my ethnographic analyses. Given this orientation, I endeavored to present my experience as a dialogue with others rather than an attempt to speak for them (Bahktin, 1990; Calafell, 2013; Conquergod, 1991). I did this by working to consider multiple points of view throughout my analysis as well as being reflexive about my own observations.

Before I discuss my analyses and results in relation to the first two research questions, in an effort to identify the discourses constituting student-athlete identity and examine the relationship between identity and collegiate sport structure, I briefly summarize the dialectical tensions that arose and speak to the structural implications of the everyday practices.

Overview of Discourses and Dialectical Tensions

The purpose of contrapuntal analysis is to first determine if texts invoked *dialogically contractive* or *expansive* talk and then consider how the interplay of competing discourses created meaning in the moment (Baxter, 2011). Dialogically contractive talk gives voice to only a single discourse while silencing others, whereas dialogically expansive talk gives voice to multiple discourses, though not necessarily

equally. Through the literature reviewed in chapter two, I have suggested that student-athlete identity stands to benefit significantly from the theoretical guidance of RDT because of the multiple relationships and discourses that contribute to what student-athletes should and do represent. Through my internship experience of everyday practices in student-athlete support, I found two primary discursive struggles⁴ animating student-athlete identity (*student-athlete, similarity-difference*) and one primary discursive struggle animating student-athlete identity through student-athlete support (*empowering-enabling-compliance*). Each dialectic was constituted through competing discourses that created a discursive struggle. Additionally, the discourses and dialectics were not mutually exclusive in the sense that they were distinctive and stand alone, but interconnected through the voices privileged in discourses (Baxter, 2011). I provide a brief overview of the discourses and dialectics before discussing them in detail through the ethnographic and contrapuntal analyses.

The dialectic *student-athlete* was particularly complex and represented the heart of this project and analysis. This dialectic was constituted through competing discourses of student-athlete identity: the *discourse of student first* (DSF) and the *discourse of athlete first* (DAF). I found this dialectic to be complex because it was simultaneously contractive and expansive (Baxter, 2011). The dialectic was contractive by denying the presence of alternates discourses, because the term student-athlete was created by the NCAA to privilege the DSF from an authoritative stance and definitively position student-athletes as educationally driven students first (Byers, 1995). In other words, the

⁴ I use the terms discursive struggle and dialectic interchangeably

term student-athlete was intended to preemptively dismiss discourses that challenged the DSF. At the same time, because the purpose of developing the term was to deny other discursive representations of student-athletes already circulating within the culture (and thereby acknowledging the presence of other discourses), such as the DAF, the term student-athlete is also dialogically expansive. Thus the dialectic *student-athlete* simultaneously invokes two discursive positions: the DSF as an authoritative discourse and the DSF and DAF in discursive struggle.

The dialectic *similarity-difference* was constituted through competing discourses that positioned student-athletes as either similar to or different than the rest of the student body: the discourse of student-athlete *as similar* (DS) and the discourse of student-athlete *as different* (DD). This dialectic was primarily invoked through efforts to better integrate student-athletes with the larger student population. However, my findings revealed that many of the everyday practices further segregated student-athletes from the larger population, although not intentionally. In regard to providing student-athlete support, I identified the dialectic of *empowering-enabling-compliance*. My choice to use these specific terms came directly from usage by community members and my everyday experience; they were not developed through the analysis. I realize that the terms empowering and enabling can mean the same thing; however, in this case the terms represented competing ideas of providing support where enabling actions undermined empowering actions. Compliance referred to NCAA compliance and complying with institutionally sanctioned policies and procedures. The dialectic of *empowering-enabling-compliance* was constituted through three competing discourses: the discourse

of support through empowering (DSEP), which assisted student-athletes by helping them to take charge of their academic and athletic lives and be responsible for their actions; the discourse of support through enabling (DSEB), which opposed empowering by taking action that prevented or eased student-athletes responsibilities and initiative; and the discourse of support through compliance (DSC), which complicated discourses of empowering and enabling when actions were taken in the best interest of the athletic department or institution (i.e. to ensure NCAA compliance) over the student-athlete.

I have briefly touched on the major discourses and corresponding dialectics of the analysis to preview the coming analysis for the sake of clarity given the denseness of the analytic project. Continuing this effort toward clarity, I also briefly explain the structural implications of the project and how they speak to the analysis.

Structural Implications within the Everyday Practices

There are two issues of structure I want to clarify before beginning the analysis. First, research question two was posed to understand the relationship between student-athlete identity and structures of collegiate sport. Through this project, I found that the everyday practices I observed and engaged in provided the rules and resources for communicative action (i.e., structures of signification) that created intelligibility in the system of collegiate sport across space and time (Giddens, 1984). The everyday practices represent the structures of signification that create coherency within the system of collegiate sport. In other words, the everyday practices were a significant aspect of the structure of collegiate sport. As such, the discourses animating student-athlete identity through everyday practices were also invoked through the structure, indicating a direct

link between student-athlete identity and structure. I explain this important connection prior to the analysis to show that when I talk about the everyday practices, I am also talking about the structure.

The second issue of structure involves the contrapuntal analysis. Generally, contrapuntal analysis involves identifying discourses and discursive interplay within actual recorded talk (e.g., transcribed interviews, online letters and blogs). Because the structure of collegiate sport is heavily reliant on the policies stipulated in both the NCAA and institutional manuals, part of my analysis follows general procedure by identifying cultural discourses present in the principles, policies, and mission statements. However, the discourses invoked through the manuals were largely monologic, giving sole voice to the DSF. Thus, I found discursive interplay primarily occurring not within these contractual rules and regulations, but between the everyday practices as contractually stated and the everyday practices as enacted.

In their study of step-family communication, Schrodtt et al (2006) looked at the divorce decree, or the legal divorce document, through two structures of signification: divorce decree as legal document and divorce decree as negotiation for informal coparental decision making (p. 748). The decree as legal document “was predicated on the belief that coparenting actions were matters of law, dictating absolutely the rights and responsibilities of parenting” (p. 748). The decree as guide “hinged not on following the letter of the divorce decree but on good faith efforts to maintain the principle of fairness with the interests of the children first and foremost” (pp. 751-52). Similar to this distinction, I found discursive interplay occurring within everyday student-athlete

practices between the contract (i.e., as stipulated contractually through the NCAA DI Manual and the Institutional Student Athlete Manual) and the enactment (i.e., how practices were carried out and negotiated by staff members and student-athletes on a daily basis). I previewed this distinction prior to the analysis to clarify how I conceptualized discourse analysis without discourse in the traditional sense.

Now that I have provided an overview of the chapter organization, the primary discourses and dialectics of analysis, and pertinent structural implications, I proceed with my analytical discussion.

The Dialectical Constitution of Student-Athlete Identity through the Structure of Student-Athlete Support

To effectively provide a rich description of my internship and research experience, I have organized my experience through three main components: the research site, the internship, and the everyday practices. I begin by painting a detailed picture of my research site to not only contextualize my analysis within the space but also to provide a greater understanding of the experience of student-athlete support and the internship as they related to the space. Next, I discuss how I incurred the internship and the initial meetings and experiences that set the stage for what the internship entailed and what was expected of me as an intern. Then I move into the everyday practices, discussing the processes and procedures in depth as well as my staff role in implementing them on a daily basis.

The Center

My internship and role within SAS all commenced within the space of The Center⁵. The Center is a 440,000 square foot building that houses the athletics and recreation departments, programming, and staff. The first and second floors include all of the varsity athletics competition areas (hockey arena, pool, basketball/volleyball courts, etc.); varsity locker rooms, fitness and training areas; the recreational fitness center and locker rooms; and various recreation staff offices. The Center is open year-round to both campus and local communities and has a regular flux of students, student-athletes, youth camps/programs, event crowds, and on/off campus community members.

The staff floor. The staff floor was home to SAS, one of the coaches suites, recreational staff offices, budget and finance offices, technical staff and interns, several all-purpose meeting rooms, three fitness rooms (i.e., cycling and fitness studios), the back door to health center, a women's and men's bathroom, and an elevator accessing all four floors. The coaches' suite included coaches' offices for four sports, one associate vice chancellor, an intern desk, several copy machines used by coaches and SAS, and the book closet where used books for SAs are stored. The recreational staff, technical staff/interns, and studio areas are on the south side of the staff floor. The coaches' suite, meeting rooms, SAS, the elevator, bathrooms, and the back door of the health center are on the north side. The area dedicated to SAS included the offices of Dion⁶, the Director

⁵ The names of the buildings and areas have been changed to protect privacy and confidentiality.

⁶ Names reflect pseudonyms to protect privacy and confidentiality

of SAS, and Rachel, the Assistant Director of SAS, and two areas designated as study tables for SAs: the study room and the study table.

The best word to describe the staff floor is chaotic, which fittingly also describes my experience working with SAS. On top of SAS responsibilities, Dion, Rachel, and myself (while I was there) also acted as an information desk. People looking for the meeting rooms, fitness rooms, and health center continually showed up at our open doors asking for directions. Although the Health Center back door was on the staff floor, it was a staff only entrance. Explaining how to get to the Health Center was so time consuming, I often wondered why there wasn't a sign at the elevator downstairs with directions. Not to mention, people were often angry at having to go back down and around to get to the entrance. The location of the bathrooms on our end brought a steady stream of fitness goers into our area often stretching and warming up in the hallway or changing clothes in the bathroom. The elevator was also heavily trafficked by student-athletes, coaches, and support staff as well as people looking for the meeting rooms, the health center, or just lost in The Center.

The chaotic and multi-purpose environment of the staff floor had a distinct worker bee, production floor feel. There were always people coming and going, flowing in and out of offices. There were a steady stream of SAs studying in the study room or at the study table and waiting to see Dion or Rachel. Around lunch time the smell of people heating up meals in the microwave filled the hallway. Staff attire on this floor was primarily business casual, such as khakis and polo shirts, or team logo warm-ups and gear for coaches. SAs and a handful of work study students wore anything from team sweats

to jeans and t-shirts to high fashion outfits. A few of the administrative staff wore slacks or suits, but there was more of a casual atmosphere on this floor. Amidst the backdrop of the everyday hustle and bustle, the employment instability of the athletic department was subtle but observable on this floor. In one highly visible example, certain staff members were continually being shuffled from the main floor, to the staff floor, to executive floor and back again. Budget issues led to ongoing re-structuring and position cuts. In addition to the office shuffle, the ever impending possibility of losing one's job was evident in the frequent hushed whispers and closed door conversations. I do not say this to imply a gossipy nature to the staff floor but rather a palpable fragility and vulnerability from never knowing how long one's job would last. Entire coaching staffs could be terminated at a moment's notice. Several staff members and one coaching staff were dismissed during my time.

The executive floor. The executive floor included the other coaches' suite, the executive recreation suite, the executive athletics suite, the Club, and the Room. The executive floor coaches' suite included the remainder of the sports as well as several executive level athletics administrators. The recreation suite included the executive level recreation administrators. The athletics suite included the athletic director, director of compliance, senior women's administrator, and several administrative executives. The Club was an open area at the top of the main bleachers that served as an exclusive member's only space for hockey and basketball games, serving food and beverages as part of the membership. The Room was a fancy meeting room used for a variety of

purposes both athletic and academic. On game days it served as part of the Club, arranged for food service and socializing.

The best word to describe the executive floor is reserved. It was always quiet and all business up there except for game days and other social events in the Room. Staff attire on this floor was primarily business suits except for among the coaches, although some of the coaches on this floor did wear suits or shirts and ties. There was also a subtle power structure to the executive floor. Going up to the executive floor involved a slight change in demeanor, like moving from the production floor to the executive offices. A note of reverence and decorum permeated the air as one perused department nostalgia through the trophy cases and photographs of major donors and past athletics directors and executives. There was also a chill to the air, from the hockey arena, that gave the atmosphere a sterile feeling. When staff talked about people from the executive floor coming down to the staff floor, it was as if they were slumming (i.e, “Did you see Margaret was down on the staff floor today?!”). In addition to the executive suites, the teams on the executive floor were the higher visibility teams such as hockey, skiing, men’s lacrosse, basketball, and gymnastics. They were the teams with the revenue potential. The ski team was recent national champions’. The hockey team regularly made it to the conference playoffs but hadn’t had a championship run in almost five years. Moreover, during this year our institution was looking to get picked up by a bigger and better conference and these were the teams that would attract conference offers.

My space. I want to speak briefly about my space within the Center. The best word to describe my space is transient. I had no official space or desk. I generally

started off the day in Dion's office. Her office had a warm and welcoming, lived-in feel that enticed people to enter. Nearly every inch of her office was decorated in some way. The walls were covered with posters, cartoons, inspirational quotes, and photographs of her family and pets. Shelves on one wall were adorned with a variety of books, cereal boxes, figurines, miniatures, and endless random trinkets. She had bowls and jars of candy on her desk as well as what seemed like an endless supply of chips, cookies, and treats that kept a steady stream of SAs and staff coming in and out. There was also a Keurig coffee machine along with a large storage box full of Keurig coffee, tea, and hot cocoa cups. The office was inviting, homey and comfortable. There were three chairs in the office: I usually sat in the chair that faced her desk at the start of the day with my laptop on my lap. Depending on who came into the office, I either moved chairs or moved into the hall, and occasionally I sat in Rachel's office. Rachel's office was similar to Dion's in that she had a file cabinet lined with jars of skittles, pretzels, and other treats. Her walls contained many photographs of graduating SAs as well as newspaper clippings involving stories of SAs and competitions. Most often, I moved from Dion's office to the hallway. In the hallway I either sat on the floor or brought a chair into the hall. A couple of months into the internship one of the coaches surprised me with a set of TV trays. He indicated they were for Dion's office but also said, "I think you need some kind of desk." I have never been so grateful for a TV tray in my life. The tray and folding chair became my official transient space. I was constantly ready to move. On average, I probably moved in and out of Dion's office between 5-10 times a day. At any given time I would have to pick up and go. I could regularly be seen carrying my tray and chair into the

hallway with a pile of whatever I was working on. It was pretty comical. The seemingly small office I had shared with three fellow grad students now seemed luxurious compared to this setup.

Although it was initially irritating to be constantly moving, it became an important part of my daily routine. My transient position was also in full view of the heavily trafficked staff floor walk-way. If I had a quarter for every time somebody said “That is your desk?!” or looked at me with a grimace I could probably pay off my student loans. Truth be told, I didn’t really mind. My official space served to *put me in my place*. I do not say this in a negative way. For all the discursive ways I tried to minimize my educational privilege, either by saying I was a graduate student rather than a PhD student or a teacher rather than college teacher, this highly visible ongoing daily move did it for me and I didn’t have to say anything. I was not special. Of all the people in this space, I was the least special. Anybody walking into Dion’s office could get me moved to the hallway. I had zero power in regard to my space, nothing that was mine in the sense of an office or desk or even chair. In spite of the negativity often attributed to my transient space by other staff and SAs or fellow graduate colleagues, I grew to appreciate how this space positioned me within the community. In spite of my position on the academic side of campus where some level of prestige came along with graduate student and instructor identities, over here I was in the trenches with the work-study students. And even they had an edge on me because they got paid. This positioning made me much more available and approachable.

Approaching a person sitting in an office or behind a desk with an official position can be intimidating. I once had a student tell me he felt uncomfortable coming to our shared graduate teaching office because it was so formal. Though I could appreciate his view and was happy to meet with him outside of the offices, I had to laugh about the difference in perspective and the power imbued in an office and a title. For many of us graduate student teachers, our cramped offices shared by four or five, felt like bunk beds at an ongoing slumber party even though we worked tirelessly in that space. It was wonderful and ridiculous and I loved it, but for me that space felt like a dorm room not a “professor’s office” in spite of the privilege tied to the position and the office. My space on the staff floor was the opposite of intimidating, considering I was either sitting on the floor or at a TV tray. I met many staff and engaged in many casual conversations as a result of my hallway space. I also had the opportunity to casually engage SAs waiting in the hall to see Rachel or Dion. In addition to working at my tray desk, I was regularly on the move running errands, setting up for events, and doing odd jobs for other staff when needed.

The Internship

I begin my analysis by discussing how I procured my internship within student-athlete support (SAS). The majority of dialectics comprising my analysis arose during this initial process. I discuss the internship through two sections. The first section entails my ethnographic analysis through rich description and reflexivity. Following Calafell (2013), I acknowledge my position and privilege in the telling of my ethnographic experience in order to “be accountable to others and ourselves in marking the workings of

power” (p. 7). I consider how my various identities implicate differing issues of politics, power, and privilege. In the second section, I identify and describe the discourses and dialectics that arose through this part of my experience.

Ethnographic experience with the athletic director. During the spring term of my second doctoral year, I realized I was prepared to begin my dissertation project in the coming fall. I was about to complete my course work and would have space in my schedule to accommodate the internship in the athletic department I hoped to acquire. I initially emailed the director of SAS to meet and discuss a potential internship, but did not receive a response. Shortly after, as I was preparing to follow up on my first email, I decided to change my strategy and gain permission from the athletic director (AD) first. I had spent the prior summer exploring action research, which supports an approach that involves community members directly and privileges transparency throughout the research process (Reason & Bradbury, 2008). This particular approach not only spoke to my meta-theoretical commitments to engaged and action oriented scholarship where I could work with the community, but also, I believed, fit well with the community of sport. Based on previous research as well as my personal experience, I understood the collegiate sport community to be protective and restricted, and most likely hesitant, if not suspicious of research of any kind, especially from the outside. I knew I would not be able to conduct a true action research project with equal community participation and involvement, but I believed a critical ethnographic approach would help lay the groundwork for future research efforts and also honor my meta-theoretical commitments. Since the AD was the head of the athletic department, I decided that speaking with her

first would facilitate my goal of transparency. Her assistant replied to my email and set up the meeting.

I tend to be pretty confident in interview situations however, as I sat waiting for my meeting with Ruth I began to feel a little nervous. Would my confidence be read as arrogance or superiority? In my prior experience with the baseball team I encountered mixed reactions to my education and degree. I had already become accustomed to avoiding the terms *PhD* or *doctorate* because they often seemed to put many community members on the defensive. For example, as the founding president and general manager of the baseball club, I was directly involved with almost everything we did on and off the field. My gender was regularly questioned in relation to my position within this male-dominated space. My passion for baseball didn't usually suffice as explanation in regard to my commitment and position with the club. I would then explain that I was graduate student interested in sports. This explanation was apparently more legitimate; however, it was often a catch 22 where my education was regarded with caution— as if I might break out in lecture at any moment or use too many “smart” words. These experiences led me to de-emphasize my academic background as much as possible within the baseball position in particular and the sport community in general. However, in regard to my meeting with the AD, I struggled with the appropriate degree of tempering/drawing on my education to legitimize my request for an internship.

My meeting with Ruth was brief and to the point. She was cordial but all business, talking to me while also working on her computer. I imagined that she rarely had the opportunity to focus on one task at a time. I explained my interest in working

with SAS along with my qualifications. I further explained that I hoped the internship would add to my experience and give me an opportunity to conduct my doctoral research. The mention of research gave her pause as she looked up from her computer and said, “Wait up, hold on. What do you mean research?” She then explained that they already conducted two surveys and exit interviews, as required by the NCAA, which she believed was enough imposition on the students already busy schedule. I noticed that she used the term *students* rather than *student-athletes*. I didn’t necessarily find the word choice to be intentional but wondered how often various terms were used and in what context. I assured her that the internship was more about understanding the experience of student-athletes, practical experience for my future goals, and thinking through new ways to conduct meaningful research that would be useful to the community and respect the rigorous demands of the student-athletes. I told her observation was my only goal, that I would not interact beyond my role as an intern, and that I would be absolutely transparent about any research ideas moving forward. She looked at me for a moment, digesting what I had said and seemed satisfied. She said she would like to make something happen, but only if it benefitted me, the athletes, and the athletic department. I made a quick mental note that this time she used the word *athletes*, wondering if her choice of identity focus between this statement and the last was significant or happenstance. She then picked up her phone and called the director of SAS, Dion, to come to her office. When Dion arrived, Ruth summarized our conversation, and said she would like it to happen if everyone would benefit and then dismissed us.

Discourses animating student-athlete identity. The main reason this meeting was integral to my experience is because Ruth gave voice to one discourse during our conversation that would soon reveal a primary dialectic animating student-athlete identity and support, the discourse of *student first*.

Student-athlete as student first (DSF). The DSF was a dominant discourse pervading collegiate sport culture throughout the utterance chain as both a cultural and relational discourse. Cultural discourses are those circulating within the larger social culture as either previously established discourses (distal already-spoken) or anticipated responses of a generalized other (distal not-yet-spoken). Relational discourses circulate within relationships as either previously established discourses (proximal already-spoken) or anticipated responses of the relational partner (proximal not-yet-spoken).

Cultural discourses (distal already-spoken). The NCAA Division I Manual stated, “It is the responsibility of each member institution to establish and maintain an environment in which a student-athlete’s activities are conducted as an integral part of the student-athlete’s educational experience” (NCAA 2.2.1, Appendix B). The institution’s student-athlete manual reflected this mandate, “Student-athletes are first and foremost students who are highly committed to both their academic and athletic lives” (SAS, Appendix A). I found the DSF was primarily animated at the site of the distal already spoken, through policies, procedures, and contracts of the governing body of the NCAA and the institutions. The DSF contributed to the dialectic of *student-athlete*, maintaining that the needs of the *student* and education always come before the needs of the *athlete* and participation.

Relational discourses (proximal not-yet-spoken). The DSF was also invoked as a relational discourse in my meeting with Ruth. Our discussion of my potential internship depended largely on my understanding of the DSF as a precursor to my pending relationship with the athletic department, via NCAA and institutional mandate. In other words, our conversation implied the expectation that I not only understood the institution's position regarding student-athletes in relation to the DSF, but also that my role as a staff member would reflect the DSF. Discursive struggle arose in my relationship with the department at the site of the proximal not-yet-spoken as Ruth centered the DSF in anticipation of other discourses that might be associated with athletic support.

Ethnographic experience with the director of SAS. Following the meeting with Ruth, I had a series of meetings with Dion over the course of a few weeks. During my initial meetings Dion echoed Ruth's statement that this internship would proceed only if it worked out in the best interest of all involved. I agreed that should be the case. She asked me to provide her a list of my expectations of the internship and assured me she would hold me to them. She then talked briefly about the student-athlete population, saying many of the issues they dealt with involved privilege. This made sense given it was a private institution with a predominately privileged socioeconomic demographic. She also explained that the athletic department was making a concentrated effort to stop enabling student-athletes and encourage them to be more active in their own lives and school. She said graduation came as a shock to many as they ceased to be athletes and entered the real world. Given my experience teaching at the institution, I felt this was

true of most of the student-population based on their economic privileges and the continued involvement of parents. However, student-athletes also receive additional privileges such as priority registration, additional advising, dedicated tutors, and specialized programming in addition to the many social perks and oft-coveted status of a collegiate student-athlete. Our initial meetings also briefly touched on professionalism and boundaries, chain of command and organizational hierarchy, staff interactions, personality conflicts, and lack of staff diversity. She said not to be offended if we didn't see eye to eye, saying she would ask for input but she is the boss and has the final say. I appreciated this statement because she often engaged me in difficult and occasionally uncomfortable conversations where we had contrasting opinions.

We spoke in detail about what I hoped to gain from the internship. I discussed my academic background and experience with the baseball club and youth sports. I explained that my professional aspirations involved teaching as well as active involvement in a collegiate athletic department and potentially a professional sport organization in the future. I presented her with the formal statement of my expectations (see Appendix C). We discussed the areas of SAS that would most benefit from my internship which included academic advising/registration, textbooks, tutoring, study hall, as well as aiding her assistant Rachel with the Champs/Lifeskills program, FYT. After our first two meetings Dion asked if I would be willing to meet with her other staff members and I agreed.

At our next meeting, I met with the full SAS team. Dion oversaw all aspects of the department, senior CHAMPS/LifeSkills programming (i.e., resume and job skills,

translating athletic skills to career skills, career planning), as well as advising four of the sports teams. Additionally she was involved with a variety of programs within athletics and across campus as well as attending a host of meetings (e.g., coaches meetings, internal/external operations meetings, budget meetings). I would soon discover her duties went far beyond SAS to ticket sales, donor relations, event help, and many other odd jobs. Rachel, the Assistant Director of SAS, advised the majority of the sports teams as well as directing FYT. Both Dion and Rachel met with potential and incoming student-athletes and parents on a rolling basis during campus visits. Ann, assistant to the Director of [NCAA] Compliance, was engaged with SAS in a limited role as she was primarily involved with the Office of Compliance. She was directly involved with making sure that our department and staff as well as the student-athletes adhered to all NCAA regulations. She also advised two teams. Together these three women made up the department of Student Athlete Support, whose mission stated:

Student athlete services is committed to empowering student-athletes to take charge of their education and life by providing the tools and resources necessary to prepare for life roles. We encourage student-athletes to capitalize upon collegiate and athletic experiences as they become holistic persons. (SAS, Appendix A)

Although Ann helped out with advising, she did not work in our office and, for the most part was a liaison between compliance and SAS. Thus the majority of responsibility fell on Dion and Rachel. I was stunned that three, but really two, staff members were tasked with upholding the department mission for all ten sports, a total of 17 teams and approximately 320 athletes. A ratio of 1:160 seemed woefully insufficient for such a comprehensive job. I would later find out that this ratio is common across athletic

support staff departments. I have only touched on the numerous responsibilities that these women shouldered on a daily basis that far surpassed a normal work week/day, given athletic contests and events often took place in the evenings and on weekends. Additionally, Dion and Rachel provided support beyond their office hours as student-athletes had their personal cell phone numbers and regularly took to calling and/or texting. I came to deeply admire the significant amount of time and personal investment these women contributed to their jobs and the student-athletes. Following my meeting with the SAS staff, I had another follow-up meeting with Dion at which time she told me they wanted to offer me the internship pending a background check.

I want to briefly address a situation that arose through an issue with the background check that is relevant for two reasons. First, my actions in relation to the background check not only jeopardized my pending internship but also strained my relationship with Dion and led to the questioning of my integrity and commitment before the internship officially began. Wicks and Reason (2009) discussed the difficulties of initiating action research, saying that “the success or failure of an inquiry venture depends on the conditions that made it possible. . . in the way the topic was broached, and on early engagement with participants and co-researchers” (p. 244). Second, this situation enabled me to experience first-hand the tension between academic and community time as well as the reservations many communities can feel toward academics and research because of academic commitments (Lantz et al., 2001; Ouimette, 2014). The internship was ready to go pending a background check. Typically they take 3-5 days, however it had been over two weeks with no word from human resources. Based

on my prior experiences with administrative offices, I was inclined to follow-up and make sure that some minute detail wasn't impeding the process. Without thinking much of it, I decided to give HR a call and make sure my information was correct. After about two minutes of conversation, we discovered they had an incorrect spelling of my email address. Relieved I sent Dion an email letting her know I had spoken with HR and the issue had been resolved. Over several emails and one phone conversation, it became apparent that Dion was not pleased with my actions. Until that point, I hadn't perceived my actions to be overstepping my bounds, but rather saw the situation as following up on my paperwork to ensure I had filled it out properly.

Upon our first meeting following the incident, I was immediately aware that I had crossed a line. During our discussion of my decision, I realized that my actions, although unintentional, communicated that I did not trust Dion to take care of the background check. It also gave her cause for concern that my anxiety surrounding the internship's tie to my academic commitment might lead to future issues. Although I wanted to believe she was overreacting, I knew she was right. Regardless of my anxiety and rationalizing that I was simply following up on my own paperwork, I had stepped outside the chain of command, which we had discussed in previous meetings. This was an important lesson for me because graduate school, in spite of the specific processes and procedures and regular collaboration, largely trains one to be fiercely independent, self-sufficient, and proactive. There is a chain of command; however, everybody has such a busy schedule that relieving your superiors of administrative and paperwork snafus tends to be welcomed and appreciated. There is a very specific power structure but it is vastly

different from that in the athletic department. I would come to learn that the chain-of-command procedures in the athletic department were integral to the internal structure especially in light of job instability. I was prepared for Dion to revoke her offer of the internship in light of this situation however, she preferred to frame the situation as a teachable moment and said she would rather move forward and put this behind us.

Moving forward, I continued to struggle with when and how to take initiative appropriate to my role. My academic experience and training were somewhat problematic in regard the power structure within the athletic department and I would work to continually negotiate the power imbued in my various identities as I moved in and out of my different positions on campus. Reflection on this experience was important to successfully continuing work within the athletic department.

I thought about action research (AR) and the difficulties expressed with balancing academic and community time (Lanz et al., 2001). An AR approach privileges the community needs first, which is part of the reason I philosophically favored such an approach. Yet when it came time to begin my community participation, I found the doing of the approach to be fairly difficult given the weight and constraints of my academic commitments. This was a tough pill to swallow. I was about to start my third year of doctoral work which included teaching two classes, finishing my course work, prepping for and taking my comprehensive exams, and this internship which would provide the data for my dissertation. I had invested an enormous amount of time and money into my Master's and PhD programs and it was crunch time. How could I

effectively temper my academic expectations in relation to my commitment to the community?

This situation and a comment from a staff member also led me to consider how I went about acquiring the internship. Although I didn't think about it at the time, contacting Ruth without waiting for a response from Dion could also be perceived as disrespecting the chain of command. Additionally, during the first few weeks of my internship, I found out there was an underlying tension between interns and staff members. Commenting on this tension, I was told "[these] staff members have put in their time but don't have your education and you [interns] are just happy to be here." Although I found this comment to sting, I couldn't argue. In my desire to work within the athletic department and collegiate sport community, I believed offering my service would be a positive in a department that is typically overloaded with work and understaffed due to budget. Madison (2011) reminds us to be reflexive of the *materiality* of our surroundings as we conduct ethnographic fieldwork. However, I did not consider the material implications of my actions or that my offer of free service may deny another worthy of paid compensation in a highly sought-after position in the sexy culture of collegiate athletics. In my quest to be transparent by starting at the top, I realized that, in addition to jumping the chain-of-command, I had used my educational privilege to skip over the usual process one might go through to gain such an internship. Additionally, I was faced with digesting the idea that my (un)intentional use of privilege may have brushed aside others who would not feel comfortable simply emailing the AD. This recognition of materiality led me to "challenge my own reflections and ask myself the

hard timeless question of how I had the right or the authority to [be here and] make judgments” about a space and community to which I did not belong (Madison, p. 132). Were my intentions truly for the benefit of the community or was the community benefit secondary to my personal and academic gain?

Discourses and dialectics animating student-athlete identity. My initial meetings invoked two dialectics: *empowering-enabling-compliance* and *similarity-difference*. Both dialectics were animated by competing discourses at various sites of the utterance chain.

Dialectic of empowering-enabling-compliance. Discussing the internship with Dion brought up the dialectic of *empowering-enabling-compliance*. This dialectic was constituted through competing discourses of student-athlete support through empowering (DSEP), support through enabling (DSEB), and support through compliance (DSC). The dialectic was invoked at various sites of the utterance chain through cultural and relational discourses.

Cultural discourses (distal already-spoken). My initial conversations with Dion brought up cultural discourses of student-athlete support. While we didn’t get into depth about specific issues of enabling and empowering, she made a point to say that she and Rachel worked to provide support that would encourage student-athletes to take initiative and shoulder more responsibility regarding their athletic and academic commitments. I contextualized her comments within the larger culture of collegiate sport in terms of the ongoing academic concerns. It made sense that SAS departments were well aware of how academic impropriety reflected negatively on teams and institutions and I assumed

that these issues were part of the ongoing discussions in athletic departments across the country. Given that she was in the business of supporting student-athletes, her comments about privilege, this recent initiative, and past/current affairs involving impropriety through student-athlete support across the country, I inferred that the line between enabling and empowering was both thin and problematic. The discourse of compliance was also present, as it foregrounded all supportive efforts through NCAA compliance; however it was not directly discussed or apparent to me at that time. I would later observe the centrality of compliance within support practices, which led me to conclude that any discussion of student-athlete support usually involved issues of compliance.

Relational discourses (proximal not-yet-spoken). The dialectic of *empowering-enabling-compliance* was also invoked as a relational discourse in terms of Dion's expectations of how I would engage in support. The dialectic was invoked at the site of the proximal not-yet-spoken as she gave voice to the DSEP with the expectation that support efforts would be challenged by the DSEB. In other words, she told me I would be expected to provide empowering support and would be accountable to actions that could be construed as enabling. Her comments regarding empowering and enabling were very brief at this time. As discussed above, although not directly addressed, the DSC was also present in our discussion because all supportive efforts were implemented according to NCAA compliance.

Dialectic of similarity-difference. Our initial conversations regarding my interest in athletics also invoked the dialectic of *similarity-difference* through competing discourses of student-athletes as similar to the rest of student body (DS) and student-

athletes as different from the rest of the student body (DD). The dialectic was invoked through existing cultural discourses.

Cultural discourses (distal already-spoken). Through our discussions of my interest in collegiate athletics and professional aspirations, I explained my belief that student-athletes did not receive enough education and support which, I believed, led to many of the current issues concerning collegiate athletics. My explanation and discussion of current issues drew largely on cultural discourses of the DD that implied student-athletes need additional support beyond what is offered to the larger student-body. Dion asked me why student-athletes should get special treatment in the form of the additional services at their disposal. Why should they get additional advising and registration priority? Why should they receive separate tutoring and academic assistance? Should they not go through the academic experience just as everyone else? Dion's questions gave voice to cultural discourses of the DS by situating SAs as students who have access to the same academic support as the rest of the student body. Her questions also gave voice to the DD because difference is implied by the special services tailored just for SAs. Our conversation invoked the dialectic of *similarity-difference* as we both saw the DS and the DD as competing.

In this section, I have discussed my research site and the initial stages of my internship as well as the discourses and dialectics invoked through my introduction to student-athlete support. I have included significant moments regarding my fieldwork experience as well as reflexive analysis of my experiences and my position within my

fieldwork. I continue my analysis by discussing the everyday practices that represent the main focus of my project.

Everyday Practices

In this section, I discuss the everyday practices of student-athlete support that were largely the focus of my internship. The following practices of student-athlete support were pertinent to both my role as an intern and the everyday experience of student-athletes: academic textbooks (the process of negotiating book scholarships and compliance), study-hall (study sessions mandated by coaches), advising and priority registration (academic and athletic advising processes along with early registration privileges), tutoring (academic support provided through the athletic department), and FYT (the first year transition program). These practices are not solely relevant to the institution of study, but take place in all athletic departments. Additionally the NCAA speaks to each practice in some way if not through a direct policy (for full list of pertinent NCAA policies, see Appendix B).

I work between the official statements of the practices through the NCAA and institution and my experience of the practices through day to day implementation. As in the previous section, I continue to first discuss my critical ethnographic account of the everyday practices and my observations of how discourses and dialectics animating student-athlete identity were invoked through the structures of signification. Then I identify and describe the discourses and dialectics through the lens of relational dialectics theory. This part of the analysis speaks to research questions one and two by identifying the discourses and dialectics and examining the link between student-athlete identity and

collegiate sport structure. After discussing the practices, discourses, and dialectics, I present my contrapuntal analysis which speaks to the second part of research question one in regard to how discursive interplay contributes to the meanings of student-athlete identity. Following the contrapuntal analysis, I address research question three and discuss how the interpenetration of varying discourses of student-athlete identity can inform community members in (re)developing everyday practices.

I want to be clear that I am looking at the practices in relation to the structure. Thus my critique is aimed at the structure of collegiate sport practices and not the staff. The staff positions are embedded within the structure and thus, staff members have very little if any autonomy within their positions apart from the established structure. I speak explicitly to this distinction between structure and staff because I do level a significant critique at the practices and structure of collegiate sport but not at the staff. This structure has been in place for decades and precedes the current employees.

Academic textbooks. Some student-athletes (SAs) receive a book scholarship in addition to tuition waivers. Compensation for academic textbooks falls under approved financial reimbursement for SAs. “The NCAA permits scholarship funds to cover the actual cost of required course-related textbooks only” (SA Handbook, Appendix A). Funds may not be used for optional texts or supplies (e.g., pens, calculators). Buying/sharing textbooks with other students or athletes not on book scholarship is an NCAA violation which results in ineligibility. Books provided on scholarship are not property of the SAs and must be returned to the athletic department at the end of the term where they are recycled for repeated use. Failure to return books may result in “loss of

eligibility for practice or competition, having to repay the Athletic Department for the cost of the books, or having your athletic scholarship reduced” (SA Handbook, Appendix A).

Implementing the textbook practice was an intricate and involved process. An enormous amount of labor and hours go into making sure that NCAA textbook compliance is observed and also to ensure that the practice is cost effective by reusing books when possible. Helping out with textbooks was one of my initial intern duties that took place prior to the start of fall term. Moving forward, textbooks became one of my primary responsibilities. Before the start of each term lists were generated for each SA that included their registered classes and a list of both required and optional books for the class. These lists were available to all students via the bookstore website; however, SAS took on the responsibility of printing lists for each SA. Next, the lists were reviewed (usually by Rachel and work-study students) to determine which books were currently available in book storage (i.e., those recycled from previous terms). The study room provided space for ease of used book organization and distribution. Books were placed in stacks by class. Either Rachel or a seasoned work-study would go through the SA lists and mark which books were available used with the notation “UBA” or used book available. This notation meant the book was not to be purchased new in the bookstore as the necessary edition was available in the used book repository.

During the first week of school, SAS set up a table in the bookstore to aid SAs in the bookstore process. There were several steps to this process. First, SAs had to approach the table to read and sign their name acknowledging the NCAA and

institutional policies reminding them that textbook violations could result in ineligibility and loss of funds or scholarship. After signing, we handed them their book sheet and it was then their responsibility to go and find the appropriate books. Next, books were brought back to the table for a SAS member to double check against the sheet for “UBA” notations to make sure no new versions of books currently held in the department were purchased. After confirming only the correct books would be purchased, a purchase order was given to the SA to take to the bookstore checkout where books would be charged to the athletic department. The purchase order had the student’s name, student number, sport, and sport number. After checking out, the SA returned to the table one final time to bring two copies of the book receipt and the purchase order receipt. The SAs left with only their books and no receipts; any returns or exchanges meant they had to stop back by the table (if during the first week) or by Rachel or Dion’s office to get the receipt and a new purchase order for which copies also had to be returned to them after the transaction was complete. The SAS member would staple these together on the SAs book list sheet and file by sport and team. After that, SAs would pick up any used books across campus in the quiet room. It is important to note that in previous terms all books, new and used, were gathered beforehand for SAs. All they had to do was show up, sign the paper and collect their books. Many institutions continue to provide this full service. However, the recent department effort to stop enabling SAs where possible led to a change in the textbook process at this institution.

My first textbook job was to go through all of the printed SA textbook sheets, fill out corresponding purchase order forms with appropriate information, clip together and

organize by sport. This process took around 5-6 hours and was done prior to the first week of the term. Dion accompanied me for the first few days of doing books which were insanely hectic. The process was an ordeal, especially when we had a line of twenty plus students coming back and forth to the table several times. I was grateful to have Dion there, because some of the SAs were impatient and her attitude was such that this was a privilege and however long and inconvenient the process felt, they were getting free books. Even so, I like to feel efficient and competent and it was hard for me to struggle through the process those first few days under the watchful eyes of many. Some were very polite and grateful while others were impatient, ungrateful, and rude; not much different than the other students purchasing books in the store. I heard quite a few grumbling about why we switched to the new process when the old way was so much easier. Some were upset to find they had to walk all the way across campus to get their used books. To all of these complaints Dion would remind them, this is a privilege.

Dialectics animating student-athlete identity through the textbook practice and SAS. Through my experience of the textbook practice, I identified two dialectics animating student-athlete identity: *student-athlete* and *similarity-difference* and one dialectic animating student-athlete identity through support: *empowering-enabling-compliance*. As these dialectics arose in each of the everyday practices, I identify and explain them here first and then provide further examples as I discuss each additional practice.

Dialectic of student-athlete. The dialectic of *student-athlete* was constituted by competing discourses of the student-athlete as a *student first* (DSF) and the student-

athlete as an *athlete first* (DAF). The DSF animated understandings of the student-athlete as educationally driven, independent and capable of initiating balance between athletic and academic commitments while privileging the academic experience. The DAF animated understandings of student-athlete identity as dependent, incapable of managing balance, and athletically driven. Whenever the term student-athlete is used, both the DSF and DAF are given voice simultaneously throughout the utterance chain through both cultural and relational discourses. The dialectic was primarily invoked by the structures of signification that guided the academic textbook practice.

Cultural discourses (distal already-spoken). The discursive struggle of the DSF and the DAF was always present at the site of the distal already-spoken (discourses circulating in the larger culture) and distal not-yet-spoken (anticipated responses from generalized others in the larger culture). At the site of the distal already-spoken, the DSF and the DAF contribute to various cultural understanding of student-athletes within collegiate sport. In other words, the site of the distal already-spoken points to our understanding of what is known within the culture. Thirty years after the first intercollegiate contest, the Carnegie Foundation launched the first investigation concerning academic deterioration based on the commercialization of sport. From that point forward, ideas of student-athlete identity have been contested and any discussion of student-athletes simultaneously invokes competing discourses of the DSF and the DAF. Through the textbook practice both discourses were invoked through the structures of signification that guided the process of receiving books through book scholarship. The DSF was invoked through the NCAA and institutional policies because books are

provided as part of the athletic scholarship (NCAA 15.02, Appendix B). Academics and the educational experience literally come first because an SA is not eligible to partake in athletic participation without the mandated academic requirements (NCAA 14.01, Appendix B). In spite of the seemingly dominant voice of the DSF through official mandates and the ongoing verbal centering of the educational experience, the DSF is constantly challenged by the DAF through the process and implementation of the textbook practice. Hours upon hours of labor go into making sure that the textbook practice adheres to NCAA compliance. First, compliance is built into the actual process of the textbooks. It begins by generating the SA lists to determine what books will be needed for each class and then going over each list to ensure only the required books are marked for purchase. Next, compliance is facilitated through the bookstore procedure. A multi-step process checks for compliance at every possible moment. After books are purchased, receipts and book lists were meticulously filed in case any issues arose. Throughout the textbook practice, SAs were constantly reminded of how misusing the books would lead to ineligibility and potentially scholarship loss. Other than the act of receiving textbooks for class, nothing about the textbook practice actually supports the DSF. On the contrary the intricacy of the procedures, the signed policy acknowledgements, the separate process from that of other students, and the numerous measures taken to prevent policy violation all invoke and center the DAF. Although the idea of textbooks as stated through NCAA and institutional policies appears to privilege the DSF, the process and procedure of the textbook practice work to privilege the DAF.

SAs come to understand through this process that their main priority involving the textbooks is to ensure that they navigate the process in such a way as to ensure eligibility.

SAs were continually exposed to the *student-athlete* dialectic through the textbook procedure as they were faced with cultural discourses telling them that the NCAA and institution expected them to be students first. However, the academic textbook practice largely undermined the educational focus by centering attention, not on how textbooks are important for course work, but rather on how textbooks might hinder athletic participation if used inappropriately.

Dialectic of similarity-difference. The dialectic of *similarity-difference* was also invoked through the structures of signification that guided the process. The dialectic was constituted by competing discourses of the student-athlete as *similar* (DS) to the student body at large and student-athlete as *different* (DD) from the student body at large. This dialectic was not mutually exclusive but connected to the dialectic of *student-athlete*. RDT leads us to consider how various dialectics are interconnected (Baxter, 2011). The DS connected to the DSF in regard to the centering of the educational experience whereas the DD connected to the DAF in the centering of the athletic experience.

Cultural discourses (distal already-spoken, distal not-yet-spoken). The dialectic of *similarity-difference* was invoked at the site of the distal already-spoken through the structure of the textbook process. Discursive struggle between the DS and the DD arose through cultural understandings of student-athletes as similar to and different from the larger student population circulating in overarching collegiate culture through the common practices of collegiate students. In some ways, purchasing textbooks invoked

the DS. First, not all SAs receive a book scholarship, thus some went through the process and purchased books in the same manner as the larger student body and were not bound by the textbook rules that govern SAs on scholarship. Second, SAs on scholarship partially navigated the process in a similar manner as the larger student body (e.g., going to the book store, finding one's books, going through the checkout process). However, their process was also distinct (e.g., separate purchasing process for SAs on book scholarship, they are not permitted to keep or share their books, repercussions for losing or sharing books) which invoked the DD.

At this institution, the distinction of difference was visible as SAs took part in a separate process than other students in full view of the bookstore and larger campus community. Throughout my experience in the bookstore, there were many random students who approached our table either mistaking us for general bookstore help or curious about our purpose. When asked, I would tell inquirers that the table was there for student-athletes. In addition to those who asked directly, the process was highly visible within the bookstore. Our table was set up across from the check-out registers and right in front of the bookstore entrance. If someone happened to overlook the table upon walking in, they would most likely view our table while waiting in line to check out. For observers, our separate table, separate line, and separate process visually invoked the DD.

What was not necessarily understood through casual observation was the purpose of the separate process. It appeared to be more of "special" privilege for SAs rather than a sophisticated procedure to ensure compliance. Yes, the process did involve the privilege of the book scholarship, but there were numerous other students who also

received books through academic and other scholarships. Book scholarships at face value were not specific to SAs and thus invoked the DS because a number of students receive tuition and book scholarships for various reasons. Scholarships and financial aid are a known and understood part of collegiate culture. Yet, there were no other tables in the bookstore representing other students on book scholarship. The textbook process, not the scholarship, invoked the DD.

At the site of the distal not-yet-spoken, discursive struggle between the DS and DD arose within the effort to change the textbook process. The choice to alter the past practice of SAs simply showing up and retrieving textbooks to the current practice of involving them in the process invoked the dialectic of *similarity-difference* by positioning the DS and DD as competing through the two different practices. The implementation of the new practice gave voice to the DS in anticipation of the DD as the choice to change the practice for the purpose of assimilation implied that the old process displayed difference. In spite of this discursive move to shift from the DD to the DS through more SA involvement, the structures of the process discussed above continued to privilege the DD.

Relational discourses (proximal already-spoken, proximal not-yet-spoken). The dialectic of *similarity-difference* was also invoked at the site of the proximal-already spoken (discourses circulating in relational history) and proximal not-yet-spoken (anticipated responses of relational partner) through the SAs relationship with the institution. As indicated above, not all SAs receive book scholarship. Incoming SAs understand that some are provided books and some are not. Discursive struggle between

the DS and the DD arose at the site of the proximal already-spoken in the relational history of the SAs and the institution as the SAs identity was marked with or without the book scholarship. Receiving the book scholarship invoked the DD as those SAs would negotiate retrieving their textbooks through the separate practice in the bookstore that identified them as SAs. Not receiving the book scholarship invoked the DS as those SAs would retrieve their textbooks in the same manner as other students and could not necessarily be identified as SAs solely through the practice (e.g., an SA wearing plain clothes could pass as any student whereas wearing team warm-ups would indicate SA identity in spite of regular textbook practice).

Discursive struggle also arose at the site of the proximal not-yet-spoken through their relationship with the institution in the anticipation of either gaining or losing the book scholarship. SAs understood that book scholarships were conditional and could be provided or revoked at any time. This distinction among SAs contributed to the visible and discussed difference of the book scholarship and associated identity in the sense that the privilege of the scholarship was neither universal nor permanent. Thus the struggle of the DS and DD arose in the anticipation of identity change based on the presence or absence of the book scholarship.

Dialectic of empowering-enabling-compliance. The dialectic of *empowering-enabling-compliance* was constituted by three competing discourses that animated student-athlete identity through staff support of the textbook practice: the discourse of support through empowering (DSEP), the discourse of support through enabling (DSEB), and the discourse of support through compliance [with NCAA or institutional policies]

(DSC). This dialectic was also interconnected to the dialectics of *student-athlete* and *similarity-difference*. The DSEP connected to the DSF and DS in the sense of providing support that centered the educational experience and paralleled the support of the larger student body by empowering them to take initiative and responsibility for their actions. The DSEB connected to the DAF and DD through providing support that positioned the student-athlete as different and justified special assistance based on the rigorous demands of the athletic schedule. The DSC also connected to the DAF and DD when the structures constituting the textbook process centered the athletic experience and positioned the student-athlete as different by employing numerous and dedicated measures to facilitate compliance and avoid actions that could affect eligibility and result in financial loss to the institution. In this way the DSC challenges the DSEP by actively preventing SAs from making mistakes and accepting responsibility.

Cultural discourses (distal already-spoken, distal not-yet-spoken). The dialectic of *empowering-enabling-compliance* was invoked at the sites of the distal already-spoken and distal not-yet-spoken through structure of the textbook process. Discursive struggle arose at the site of the distal already-spoken by de-centering the DSEB invoked through practice of the past in favor of changing the textbook practices to more directly involve SAs in the process, which centered the DSEP. Discursive struggle also arose at the site of the distal not-yet-spoken as the move to change the practice gave voice to the DSEP in anticipation of future challenges of the DSEB. Discourses of compliance complicated the discursive move from the DSEB to the DSEP through the structure of the textbook practice. The structures of signification guiding the textbook process were employed to

ensure compliance and avoid ineligibility or institutional sanction. Thus while the process did reflect an effort to avoid enabling and provide empowering support, the structure itself ultimately removed as much responsibility as possible from the hands of the student in the best interest of the institution which led to more enabling than empowering. If the structure supported empowering SAs to be more responsible, then efforts would be made to eliminate the separate practice and effectively educate SAs about textbook compliance and necessary process. Then SAs would be empowered to navigate the process on their own (like other students with various book scholarships), purchasing books and keeping receipts, and taking full responsibility for mistakes made. However, the structure largely removes this responsibility in an effort to minimize costly mistakes.

Advising and early registration. The next practice I engaged in involved advising and early registration. SAs followed the same advising practices as other students in terms of first-year and degree advising. In addition “student-athletes should schedule a planning meeting with their athletics counselor” (SA Manual, Appendix A). Per the NCAA, each institution is required to monitor and certify each SA for academic eligibility. SAs must be “enrolled in at least a minimum full-time program of studies, be in good academic standing and maintain progress toward a baccalaureate or equivalent degree” (NCAA 14.01.2, Appendix B). Teams and institutions are also monitored based on their Academic Progress Rate (APR) which includes a combination of GPA, retention, and graduation rate for which individual teams and institutions are rewarded and penalized by the NCAA (NCAA 14.02.1, Appendix B) .

Each term, SAS holds “Advising Week” which spans about ten days and corresponds with cross-campus advising. Dion, Rachel, and I attended cross-campus advising meetings as well as discussing SAS advising internally. On my own time, I studied the degree process at the university in order to appropriately advise on any degree program. I also met with advising staff in the business department as they had a very particular degree process that had to be strictly adhered. Following advising week, SAs participated in early registration which usually took place on a Friday morning before the rest of the student body began registration. According to the SA Manual:

Early registration is provided to student-athletes to assist in balancing academic And athletic commitments. It is intended to help student-athletes schedule classes around practices and minimize class absences due to excused athletic team travel. It is the responsibility of student-athletes to be aware of early registration dates and to take advantage of the opportunity. (Appendix A)

At the beginning of the academic year the athletic department reserved a computer lab for approximately eight hours for SAs to come in and register. All of SAS was on hand including Ann in addition to various professors involved with the faculty athletics program previously mentioned. After this time period, SAs were responsible for taking care of registration on their own time or bringing a laptop to the SAS area to receive help.

Throughout advising week, I was required to keep a detailed list of everybody I advised, the classes they planned to take, their degree and progress, and whether or not they had already met with their academic advisor. If not, I was responsible for informing/reminding them that they must meet with their other advisor to get their pin number lifted in order to register. At the end of each day, I sent an email to Dion, and Rachel if I advised any of her teams, that transmitted this detailed information.

Although the manual policy above indicates that meeting with a SAS advisor is a good idea, it is in fact mandatory and anybody who does not meet with SAS is either tracked down or a member of SAS notifies their coach. I was fairly overwhelmed with the whole process at first. Advising was a large learning curve with serious consequences. Dion told me to be sure I only advised on what I felt comfortable because if I advised someone incorrectly in would fall back on me. The SAs generally sought out their main SAS representative for help. Ann advised her teams separately, usually in their locker room. The rest of the teams came through Dion and Rachel's offices, some preferred to talk to them directly, some were fine to work with me or several other past interns who came just to help with advising. I hung back at first, not wanting to jump in over my head and not wanting to push my help on anyone. I was amazed at how many SAs were also receiving help from parents, who were not only giving registration advice but also making calls to professors. I wasn't really surprised given the privileged demographic but it was a foreign experience to my own.

Suddenly I am whisked back to my childhood room, pouring over a course catalog with a degree requirement sheet in one hand and a tentative list of classes in the other. I was getting out of here. Everybody, including my mother wanted me to attend college in-state, where I had been accepted and received a scholarship. But everybody I knew was going to that school and I wanted out. I was desperate to leave everything I knew behind and go to a brand new place where I knew no one. I had been secretly applying to schools on the west coast, and while I didn't get in where I had hoped, I found a community college that fed into the school I wanted at the time. I had applied for

financial aid on my own and had everything planned out so when I told my mother what was happening, there would be nothing she could do to stop me. Clair (2011) reminds us that “memories may surface at inconvenient moments, yet those memories may hold the key to understanding self through other and other through self” (p. 124). As I listened to this young man on the phone with his father with the memory of my own first-year registration still fresh, I realized that although I really wanted to be part of this community, I was very much an outsider. My life up to college prepared me for independence, thinking and figuring things out on my own, distancing myself from relying on others for anything, and doing things my way. The life of an SA is about structure and compliance, even stepping slightly out of bounds, much like in an actual competition, could incur serious repercussions. My life and personality were about anti-structure and anti-compliance. Luckily, graduate school had helped me to accept or at least appreciate the need for structure and compliance. I would come to meet a handful of SAs who were more independent like me, either because they came from a different upbringing or had been raised to be self-sufficient in spite of their family wealth and resources. But I would soon understand that this sort of independence was dangerous in this place of very strict rules and regulations. Making a rookie mistake could lead to serious consequences, the possibility of ineligibility or scholarship revocation was always lurking. No matter how capable and independent one might feel it made sense to be more dependent and let others do for you; to get as much help as possible and not stray far from the safety net. Although leadership and assertiveness seemed to be privileged in this space, it was very much constrained by the structure. What I initially observed to be

unbecoming privileged or entitled behavior made more sense as a survival strategy. This shift in perception led me to unfamiliar territory and further changes to my initial perceptions of student-athletes and collegiate sport culture.

Dialectics animating student-athlete identity through the advising/registration practice and SAS. As in the textbook practice, I found two dialectics animating student-athlete identity: *student-athlete* and *similarity-difference* and one dialectic animating student-athlete identity through support: *empowering-enabling-compliance*.

Dialectic of student-athlete. Within the practice of advising and early registration, the dialectic of *student-athlete* was constituted by competing discourses of the DSF and the DAF that were invoked through the structures of signification that guided the process. The dialectic was primarily invoked at the site of the distal already-spoken through stated policies and the procedures of the advising and registration practice.

Cultural discourses (distal already-spoken). Similar to the textbook practice, general understanding of the process of advising and registration is familiar to the larger student body and greater campus community as an established collegiate practice. Discursive struggle between the DSF and the DSA arose through cultural discourses circulating within the advising and registration practice for SAs. Advising gave voice to the DSF and centered the educational experience because an SA must be enrolled in a full credit course load and demonstrate progress toward a degree to maintain athletic eligibility. If an SA at anytime falls below the status of a full-time student or is not

making progress toward a degree, (s)he becomes ineligible. In this way, the DSF is privileged because athletic participation is not possible unless all academic requirements are met. At the same time, the DAF is also invoked because the academic experience is ultimately tied to athletic participation through eligibility requirements. The DAF is additionally invoked through the practice and process of advising and registration.

According to the NCAA, advising only needs to be available to SAs. Thus, SAs could go feasibly through advising and registration exactly like the larger student body without any additional or separate process. However, the institution chose to develop and implement a separate and additional process that invokes the DAF through the depth of additional and mandatory advising. The advising checks made on behalf of the athletic department are aimed specifically to ensure eligibility above and beyond the academic advising provided by academic advisors. Thus discursive struggle arose at the site of the distal already-spoken within the established practice of advising.

Discursive struggle also arose through the practice of early registration. This practice primarily centers athletic participation gives voice to the DAF as only SAs are given the privilege of registering for classes early. Although, the statement in the student manual describes priority registration as a tool to assist SAs in balancing their athletic and academic responsibilities, the practice itself privileges athletic responsibilities as SAs are required to schedule classes around practice time and with travel time in mind (e.g., missing Thursday/Friday class in season). Thus, through the effort to minimize missed classes and accommodate practice schedules, academics take a back seat to athletic priorities. Many SAs must forgo preferred classes and even majors because of

conflicting schedules. Although priority registration is presented as an education centering tool, thereby invoking the DSF, it actually prevents academic centering by making academics secondary to athletics which invokes the DAF.

Discursive struggle arose through the advising and registration practice as institutional language gave voice to the DSF and centering the educational experience. However, the depth of the additional advising, the practice of early registration, and the amount of labor/laborers involved in the advising and registration process above and beyond what the average student experiences all invoked the DAF, centered the athletic experience, and spoke to the significant investment that the institution has in the athletic viability of each SA.

Dialectic of similarity-difference. The dialectic of *similarity-difference* was constituted through competing discourses of the DS and the DD and invoked at several sites of the utterance chain through cultural and relational discourses.

Cultural discourses (distal already-spoken, distal not-yet-spoken). The dialectic of *similarity-difference* was primarily invoked at the site of the distal already-spoken through the structural properties that guided academic advising and priority registration. At the site of the distal already-spoken, discursive struggle between the DS and the DD arose through the similarities to and differences from the overarching advising and registration process that all college students must navigate. To some extent, the SAs took part in the same advising and registration process as the larger student body, invoking the DS, in regard to meeting with first year advisors and degree specific advisors as well as being assigned specific registrations times that must be adhered. At the same time, SAs

took part in a separate process which invoked the DD by requiring additional advising through the athletic department to ensure classes taken fulfilled the credit load requirement and demonstrated degree progress. The practice of priority registration, also distinctive from the practice of the larger student body, enabled SAs to register for classes before all other students for the specific purpose of centering athletic participation. This is a practice that is known by the larger community and has been challenged by faculty and students. Priority registration in particular makes a strong statement about the difference and privilege of SAs. Many students have difficult schedules to manage as they navigate their college education. Some are supporting extended family or raising families of their own while others have full-time jobs or extensive extra-curricular commitments. Some manage family, full-time jobs and extra-curricular commitments. However, none of these students receive priority registration. Thus the practice of priority registration is distinctly oriented to privilege athletic participation.

The dialectic was also invoked at the site of the distal not-yet-spoken through ongoing conversations I had with Dion regarding whether or not SAs should have additional advising and priority registration that distinguishes them from the student body. Discursive struggle arose between the DS and the DD as we considered why the separate practice was necessary and what it said about student-athletes in anticipation of challenges against the practices. Why shouldn't they go through the process as everyone else? How does this practice position SAs with the larger student body? Do SAs deserve priority registration over other students managing difficult schedules?

Relational discourses (proximal not-yet-spoken). The dialectic of *similarity-difference* was also invoked at the site of the proximal not-yet-spoken in the relationships between support staff and the SAs. Discursive struggle between the DS and the DD arose within relational discourses of the SAs and staff as Dion and Rachel often challenged SAs to consider the privilege of priority registration in anticipation of the challenge of that privilege. Should SAs be entitled to this privilege over other students struggling to balance work, family, and extra-curricular commitments; why shouldn't they also receive priority registration? While some SAs were open to this challenge of similarity, others invoked the discourse of difference affirming that they should receive the priority because of their commitment and service to the institution, thereby centering the importance of the athletic experience.

Dialectic of support-enabling-compliance. The dialectic of *support-enabling-compliance* was primarily invoked at the sites of the distal-already-spoken and the distal not-yet-spoken through the structure of the practice and discussions of the process.

Cultural discourses (distal already-spoken). The DSEP and the DSEB were primarily invoked at the site of the distal already-spoken through cultural discourses circulating within the structures of signification guiding the advising process. Discursive struggle arose as the DSEP, DSEB, and the DSC competed through the official language of the practices and the everyday implementation. The DSEP was invoked through the description in the SA Manual, as it appears that SAs are responsible for meeting with both academic and athletic advisors and are on their own to initiate these meetings. It also states that SAs need to be aware of priority registration times and responsible for

taking advantage of the opportunity. The DSEB was invoked through the structure in that SAs were sent numerous emails reminding them that they must meet with both advisors. Often times, specific days/times were set up for specific teams to meet with athletic advisors. A great deal of effort and time was put forth to not only move SAs through the additional advising process but to remind them about advising and registration. Multiple emails were generated, signs posted in locker rooms and throughout the staff floor, as well as verbal reminders from coaches and staff. Advising conversations specifically addresses the APR, GPA, and degree progress. Advising discussions were well documented and coaches were notified accordingly. In spite of the presence of the DSEP in the language of the practice, the DSEB was centered through the process of the practice.

Although the staff gave voice to the DSEP and worked to provide support that invoked the DSEP, the DSC complicated the process and centered the DSEB through the structures in place to ensure as little error as possible (i.e., multiple emails, designated days/times for advising, additional advising to ensure NCAA compliance). No matter how many conversations Rachel or Dion had with SAs about taking initiative and responsibility, the practices undermined those discussions. The centering of the DSEB occurred through the effort of satisfying the DSC. Because compliance measures were so deeply embedded within the structure of practice, it was nearly impossible to privilege the DSEP through practice. The best way to privilege the DSEP with regard to the DSC would be to eliminate the athletic advising practice and position academic advising solely within academic departments and programs. If the discourses of student first, similarity,

and empowering were truly centered, there would be no additional advising and SAs would be educated to advocate for themselves, taking full responsibility for satisfying academic requirements and remaining eligible for athletic participation or accepting the consequences.

Relational discourses (proximal already-spoken, proximal not-yet-spoken). The DSEP was also invoked through relational discourses between the SAs and support staff. Discursive struggle arose at the site of the proximal not-yet-spoken through the expectation that SAs would arrive at meetings with a copy of their APR, two potential course schedules (in case conflicts arose during registration), and would be prepared to lead the discussion regarding chosen classes and degree progress. The institutional language of the advising practice also placed academic responsibility on the shoulders of the SAs. The expectation and language gave voice to the DSEP. However, the DSEB and DSC were also present as detailed notes were taken to monitor and log the SAs academic progress for the purpose of following up and ensuring compliance if necessary rather than engaging in a conversation about academic progress and empowering the SA to be take care of academic responsibilities.

Discursive struggle between the DSEP and DSEB also arose through my training at the site of the proximal already-spoken as I was made aware that there had been problems with faculty members, coaching staff, and athletics staff that were helping too much and going so far as to choose classes and create schedules for SAs. In regard to my staff role, I was specifically instructed to provide empowering support and aid the SAs in doing the work themselves. I was told that some SAs would try to get me to do more for

them as other staff had in the past and I should be prepared to help them stand on their own two feet. However, the DSC continued to challenge these efforts as ultimately I was not allowed to let the SA stand alone. If (s)he was slacking in some way, I had to report it. At that point the SA would be called in or the coach would be contacted to ensure academic requirements were addressed.

Study hall. The next practice assigned to me was study hall. Study hall was not mandated by the NCAA however, the majority if not all institutions do some form of study hall to facilitate academic compliance and eligibility. According to the Student-Athlete manual:

The number of hours required for study tables is determined by each individual coach. All study table hours must be completed by Friday at 4:00 pm. If you are gone due to competition, you are responsible for completing your hours prior to leaving. Official hours recorded by SAS will be reported to coaches on a weekly basis, however you are responsible for keeping track of your hours as well.
(Appendix A)

For us study hall hours were Monday-Thursday, 8-5 and Friday 8-4 at either the large table or in the quiet room, and Sunday-Wednesday 6:30-10pm in the library. On the third floor, the sign-in sheet was located on the wall between Dion and Rachel's offices. At the library, the sign-in sheet was with whomever was working (myself and two other ex-interns). As indicated above, the number of hours required for each SA was determined by the coach at the start of each term. Once submitted, we updated the master study hall sheet to reflect all current SAs in study hall and the hours required by their coach. Most all first-year SAs and transfers were required to attend study hall for at least their first term. First-year SAs proving academic competence during the first term and returning SAs who were in good academic standing did not have to attend. As indicated above, it

was the SAs responsibility to sign in and out and keep track of their hours on their own to ensure they completed their requirement by Friday, or earlier if travelling. There were rules governing study hall involving conduct, food and tobacco use, and individual responsibility (for full list see Study Hall, Appendix A). For example, if an SA signed in but forgot to sign out, (s)he was supposed to lose those hours although exceptions were made. Tutoring, outside lectures, and seminars also counted for hours and SAs were required to submit online forms in a timely fashion, filled out completely, in order to have those hours counted.

At the end of each week I would tabulate all the hours and enter them into the master sheet. I would then email all of the coaches and let them know who hadn't completed their hours and any information available as to why (e.g., forgot to sign out, never came, or kicked out on Tuesday for Facebook). This was a huge detail oriented process in which I had to take extreme care in tabulating hours before notifying coaches. If I missed something and was wrong, the hammer came down on me. I had a few mistakes in my first weeks, some coaches were understanding, some were not. Dion didn't seem too worried about it but I hated having coaches I hadn't even met yet have a bad opinion of me over study hours. I devised an excellent method to help not only tabulate correctly but also to pinpoint the reasons why SAs weren't making hours. At first, I was stuck in Dion's office until 7 and 8 pm on Friday nights (having begun the process around 2) counting and recounting hours. It was another intricately structured process, much like textbooks. Everything had to be calculated and recorded and mistakes had consequences. Some coaches did not follow through on alleged repercussions for not

attending study hall; one team in particular regularly fell very short of their requirements (i.e, logging 0-2 of 6 required hours). They were also the most likely to get kicked out for violating the rules, but who could blame them when they knew there were no repercussions. On the other hand, other coaches dealt out serious repercussions. Some head coaches would not hesitate to bench a player who did not complete the required hours.

I found study hall to be very frustrating. Sunday nights I felt like a hall monitor. I did several rounds throughout the night to make sure the rules were being followed and that the SAs were actually doing work. Some of the SAs had very little respect for study hall regarded the practice with contempt. Given the public monitoring of the practice, I can't say I blame them. There was a handful that showed up and did their work without issue. However the majority, who remained in study hall because their grades were lacking, showed up to do nothing and consistently broke the rules involving food, groups, tobacco, and Facebook. I did not enjoy my job because I felt it was both futile and arbitrary. For those who showed up and did their work, they would have done it anyway without surveillance. For those breaking the rules and getting kicked out, study hall was a joke. Just prior to my first study hall shift, I observed Dion talking to an SA who got kicked out of study hall for being on Facebook. He was visibly angry about the whole thing and denying he had done anything wrong in spite of breaking the rules. During the first round on my first night of study hall, the same SA was one of many present. As I walked behind him I saw that he was on Facebook, not ten minutes after his arrival. This was a regular occurrence. Also regular were SAs signing in and then dilly dallying

around before getting down to work or packing up and doing nothing for the last 10-15min before signing out. I doctored people time when relevant and kicked them out when warranted but felt the whole business was counterproductive. Rather than instilling positive study habits, this practice seemed to incur more resentment toward studying. In regard to the “rules,” most of them never really got in trouble or suffered any material consequences. And often times exceptions were made that threw the system out of balance. The whole thing was a big show, for who I don’t know since this practice was institutionally designated and not mandated by the NCAA. It was clear that the students who came to study would have done so on their own, and those who didn’t were going to push the boundaries until real consequences were handed out.

Dialectics animating student-athlete identity through the structure of study hall and SAS. Again I found two dialectics animating student-athlete identity: *student-athlete* and *similarity-difference* and one dialectic animating student-athlete identity through support: *empowering-enabling-compliance*.

Dialectic of student-athlete. Within the practice of study hall, the dialectic of *student-athlete* was constituted through competing discourses of the DSF and DAF and was invoked through cultural discourses in the structures of signification that guided the process.

Cultural discourse (distal already-spoken). The dialectic of *student-athlete* was primarily invoked as a cultural discourse at the site of the distal already-spoken. Discursive struggle arose between the DSF and the DAF through the study hall practice. Similar to the textbook and advising practices, study hall invoked the DSF and centered

the educational experience by requiring first-year SAs as well as those struggling academically to designate a number of hours to studying. However, because not all SAs are required to participate in study hall, this practice also invoked the DAF and focused on the importance of academic requirements as they pertained to the athletic experience rather than centering the academic experience in general. Study hall also gave voice to the DAF as SAs were constrained by rules and monitoring that did not apply to other students which implied an athletics focused purpose. For example, study hall rules governed when and where SAs could complete study hall hours as they had to be monitored in some way for the hours to count. In addition to attending study hall sessions, SAs could also complete hours through tutoring sessions, the writing center, help from TAs of professors, and class related events. In each case the SA was monitored by another individual or had to provide proof of attending an on campus lecture or related class event. Basically, SAs were not trusted to study on their own which de-centered the education experience and centered the DAF in an effort to force positive study habits. The labor and process embedded within the study hall structure also invoked the DAF through the meticulous recording of study hall hours and the fact that errors in hour tabulation fell on staff members in spite of study hall hours being designated as the SAs responsibility.

Dialectic of similarity-difference. The dialectic of *similarity-difference* was constituted through competing discourses of the DS and the DD and was primarily invoked through cultural discourses within the structure and implementation of the study hall practice.

Cultural discourses (distal already-spoken). Discursive struggle arose at the site of the distal already-spoken through cultural discourses in the established study hall practice. Many SAs were not subject to study hall went about studying on their own in a similar manner to the larger student body which invoked the DS. On the contrary, the structure and practice of study hall invoked the DD. There are many resources on campus to assist all students in building more effective study habits, however they are voluntary and student-driven pursuits. There are rules and guidelines to using the library and study rooms but nobody is walking around making sure students in the library are doing school work rather than other activities. There are no repercussions for students found using Facebook or texting on their phone where students might lose privileges or have to have a one-on-one talk with a librarian or teacher (whereas SAs must speak with Rachel or Dion and/or their coach following study hall infractions).

Part of my struggle with study hall was the prominence of the DD. The larger student body is responsible for taking the initiative to study and develop good study habits on their own. This is an integral part of the overall educational experience. Study hall, on the other hand, subjects SAs to excessive monitoring and rules that do not apply to other students. I personally felt like the monitoring was a degrading practice that undermined rather than promoted study habits. Additionally I felt like the rules further differentiated SAs from other students. As someone who spends a great deal of time studying and in the library, I can attest to the overwhelming incidence of people texting and getting on Facebook while studying. Also, most everybody, including myself, has food. I understand that these things can provide distraction but not necessarily. Part of

developing good study habits is learning to deal with distractions and focus on studying which largely happens through trial and error. I understand the thought process behind the rules and the attempt to enforce “study time” but I did not find them to necessarily be supportive. On the contrary, the rules tended to inflame some SAs because they were distinctly different from other students studying. Centering the educational experience means allowing the educational experience to happen. However the rules speak more to the DAF and the importance of quickly developing good study habits in order to better take care of academic requirements in the limited time afforded to SAs.

Dialectic of empowering-enabling-compliance. The dialectic of *empowering-enabling-compliance* was primarily invoked through cultural discourses embedded within the structures of signification. The dialectic was constituted by competing discourses of the DSEP, the DSEB, and the DSC. The DSEP and the DSC were invoked through the statement of the practice in the SA Manual which stated that study hall hours were assigned by coaches and regulated by SAS but also that maintaining and recording hours were the SAs responsibility. The DSEB was invoked through various practices that deviated from “the rules” to ensure SAs made their hours even though “making” hours was completely arbitrary. For example, if an SA forgot to sign in or out, sometimes Rachel or Dion would allow the hours after a discussion with the SA. Additionally, not making hours sometimes carried no consequences depending on the coach. The DSEP and the DSC arose again through the description of study hall and the intricate practice of recording, maintaining, and informing coaches of study hall hours by SAS. If study hall hours were ultimately the responsibility of the SA as implied by the statement in the

manual, why was SAS a part of this practice? According to the empowering discourse constituted through the study hall statement, study hall should take place between the coach and the SA where an SA independently completes study hours and checks in with the coach.

In the larger sense of the student body, disciplining one's self to develop effective study habits that support performance in the classroom is a major part of the collegiate educational experience. Many students regularly suffer consequences in the classroom due to insufficient study habits. Failure to effectively prioritize homework while negotiating the collegiate experience can lead to poor grades and drop in GPA that could lead to loss of scholarship or other academic privileges for any student. The study hall practice invoked the discourse of compliance, athlete first, and difference because significant measures beyond what the average student experiences were taken to force positive study habits through excessive rules, monitoring, and consequences. These structures were in place to minimize mistakes and irresponsibility because those mistakes, when made by an SA, cost the institution. Unfortunately, in the effort to protect the institution, the educational experience is de-centered and the SA loses out on valuable learning moments to circumvent institutional cost.

Tutoring. In addition to study hall, I was also assigned tutoring responsibilities. The NCAA requires that all institutions make academic advising and tutoring services available to SAs and stipulates that this can be offered through the usual academic departments or by the athletics department (NCAA 16.3.3.1, Appendix B). As per the institutional policy, tutoring services for SAs are provided free of charge through the

athletic department (SAs, Appendix A). The step by step process for SAs to receive tutoring is described in the SA Manual as well as on the SAS website where SAs submit tutor requests (SA Manual, Appendix A). My responsibilities were to interview, hire, and assign tutors to SAs. Dion would print out applications and give them to me to review. After verifying qualifications, I would contact individuals to schedule an interview. Once an interview was scheduled I sent the applicant a copy of the tutoring handbook. In regard to the interview, I was not provided a script, but was entrusted to conduct an interview to determine if the applicant was a good fit. I asked questions to determine whether or not the applicant had read the handbook and understood the regulations. I was then required to discuss the parameters of tutoring in the athletics department. Rules included acceptable locations for tutoring, hours, policies on giving or accepting gifts as stipulated by the NCAA, expectations of conduct, and privacy (SA Manual, Appendix A). After the interview I would discuss the applicant with Dion and why I thought the applicant would/would not be a good fit. I would then email the applicant with the decision. If we decided to hire, they would return to complete hiring paperwork. Once completed, I would add them to the tutoring database for assignment. I was also responsible for updating and maintaining the tutor database which included all tutors, contact information, availability, number of students the tutor currently worked with as well as max amount of students the tutor could manage at once, and subject expertise. As Dion accepted tutor requests from SAs on a rolling basis she would print them out for me, I would review the database and assign tutors tentatively. I would email the tentative tutor for availability. Upon affirmative response I would email the SA and

copy the tutor to confirm assignment, reminding the SA that from this point forward it was her/his responsibility to arrange meeting times and adhere to tutoring procedures. I always included the tutoring regulations as a reminder at the bottom of my email. At that point I would update the database and the binder (with paperwork).

Similar to my other responsibilities, tutoring involved a very specific process with digital and paper trails. I filed all emails to/from tutors and SAs involving tutoring. There were repercussions for SAs who requested and were assigned tutors but never followed through. Some would protest and claim an email had never been sent, for which I would promptly produce the email trail. If I could not produce the email/paper trail, (ir)responsibility fell on my shoulders. Again I devised new strategies to protect my involvement and make for ease of access and organization when issues arose. Occasionally, there was a great deal of re-assigning involved when SAs felt their tutor's were not a good match. Matching tutors and SAs was like a personality/dating game. I began to take detailed notes during interviews to assist the matching process. When a match didn't work out, it didn't really matter if it was the fault of the SA or the tutor. One way or another, even if an SA was being particularly difficult, we had to match a tutor and make it work. Supposedly, SAs could lose tutoring privileges but as I understood it, somebody usually worked it all out for them. At certain points, it was out of my hands and Dion or Rachel would have talks with SAs who were struggling with classes and not working well with tutors.

Dialectics animating student-athlete identity through the tutoring practice and SAS. Similar to the textbooks, advising/registration, and study hall practices, I

found two dialectics animating student-athlete identity: *student-athlete* and *similarity-difference* and one dialectic animating student-athlete identity through support: *empowering-enabling-compliance*.

Dialectic of student-athlete. Within the practice of tutoring, the dialectic of student-athlete was constituted by competing discourses of the DSF and the DAF that were invoked through the structures of signification that guided the tutoring practice.

Cultural discourses (distal already-spoken). The dialectic of *student-athlete* was primarily invoked at the site of the distal already-spoken through cultural discourses within the implementation and structure of the tutoring process. The DSF was constituted through the overarching tutoring practice which is available to all students on campus to support and enrich the educational experience. The DAF was constituted through the separate practice offered solely to SAs that centered the athletic experience by distinctive measures taken to control and monitor the tutoring process according to NCAA compliance. Again, the labor and separate processes and monitoring embedded within the tutoring structure spoke to the importance of the athletic experience rather than the academic experience. There are many opportunities to get tutoring help through various academic programs on campus. The tutoring practice in the athletic department goes above and beyond what is available to all students to not only streamline the process for SAs but to control the tutoring process. The athletic department has particular rules about where, when, and how long SAs can meet with tutors that do not apply to the general student body which speaks to the DAF rather than the DSF. Additionally, there are various points throughout the hiring and assigning process where both SA and tutor

are reminded of compliance issues that could arise through tutoring (i.e., accepting gifts from tutors). Also during the hiring process, I spoke to potential tutors specifically about their personal conduct and behavior. For example, as part of my tutoring discussion I would relay that the athletic department expected athletic tutors to conduct themselves professionally and would not be pleased to see a tutor drunk on the jumbotron at a hockey game. There were also rules about romantic relationships. If a tutor and SA were to develop romantic feelings they were to alert us so we could re-assign a different tutor. While I do understand the importance of professionalism, all of the extra precautions seemed to specifically speak to potential issues of compliance and to exert control over SAs that went beyond a “student” relationship to reflect more of an “employee” relationship.

Dialectic of similarity-difference. The dialectic of *similarity-difference* was primarily invoked at the site of the distal already-spoken through cultural discourses in the similarities to and differences from the overarching tutoring process available to all students.

Cultural discourses (distal already-spoken). As discussed above, the NCAA does not require special tutoring services offered through the athletic department but it does allow this practice. Discursive struggle between the DS and the DD arose through the established athletic tutoring practice. The DS was constituted through the possibility of SAs taking advantage of tutoring resources on campus in the same manner as the other students. They could seek help directly through resources available in individual departments. There were also tutoring services available through the library and the

Learning Effectiveness Program. The DD was invoked through the structure of the entirely separate practice with distinctive rules, regulations, and monitoring that diverged from the experience of other students for the purpose of protecting athletic participation. Tutoring is a resource provided to assist students with academic struggles. The laborious hiring process and paper trail along with rules that seek to control how, when, and from whom the SA receives help implies a focus beyond academic assistance. Perhaps the athletic department could argue that their additional monitoring aims to preserve academic integrity and avoid cheating. However, that is a viable concern across campus and does not need to be addressed in a special way by the athletic department beyond working to protect eligibility and athletic participation.

Dialectic of empowering-enabling-compliance. The dialectic of *empowering-enabling-compliance* was constituted through competing discourses of the DSEP, the DSEB, and the DSC and was invoked at the site of the distal already-spoken through discourses within the implementation and structure of the tutoring process.

Cultural discourses (distal already-spoken). Discursive struggle arose between the DSEP, DSEB, and DSC through the language and the implementation of the tutoring practice. The DSEP was given voice through the institutional statement of the practice, bestowing responsibility to procure tutoring on the shoulders of the SA in regard to submitting a request and communicating individually with tutors to set up meetings. The DSEB was constituted through the structure of the separate practice through athletics rather than educating and entrusting SAs to initiate and engage the tutoring services in place for all students on their own. The DSEB was also given voice through the

additional efforts made by coaches and SAS on behalf of the SA to successfully match a tutor deemed agreeable by the SA. The DSC was invoked through the detailed documentation process done on behalf of the SAs, the excessive rules governing the tutoring experience, and the specific conversation had with each tutor to protect the SA and their athletic participation and eligibility. The extra work done on behalf of SAs to match tutors thwarted the empowering process by doing for rather than educating and supporting. All of this extra work is done to provide academic support not for the sake of learning but for the sake of eligibility. Otherwise, SAs could effectively negotiate this process on their own without the intervention of coaches and athletics staff. SAs, and academic tutoring programs to a lesser extent, should be appropriately educated about the tutoring process in relation to compliance. The responsibility should fall to the SA to properly negotiate the tutoring process. Tutoring programs should be given basic rules but their focus should in no way be to protect eligibility and compliance. To do so speaks loudly to the importance of athletic participation over the educational experience. If the discourses of empowering, student-first, and similarity were truly privileged as indicated in the tutoring statement, SAs would be on their own to secure tutoring and ensure the nature of their tutoring adhered to compliance without institutional monitoring or accept the consequences.

FYT. The final practice I assisted with was the First Year Transition program (FYT):

The FYT program allows new student-athletes to explore what the University and athletic life has in store for them as they transition through their first year. From the beginning of the year ice breaker to a subsequent series of workshops, student-athletes will have the opportunity to learn about a variety of

topics that affect their athletic careers, as well as their life on campus. Short readings and discussions are often a part of the FYT curriculum to allow student-athletes to voice their opinions and concerns in a safe environment. (SAS, Appendix A)

This practice was geared toward first-year and transfer SAs and involved a series of workshops. The SAs were split into four groups, attending every other week, in back-to-back sessions during the first term and additional talks/workshops periodically throughout the remainder of the academic year. According to the NCAA, “An institution shall be required to conduct a life-skills program on its campus” (NCAA 16.3.1.2, Appendix B). FYT fulfilled this obligation along with additional resources for SAs preparing to graduate. Rachel was in charge of FYT and Dion was in charge of programming for the upper-class SAs. I was tasked to assist Rachel and attend all workshops which I meant I would attend each workshop four times; additionally it was decided I would lead the workshops on two occasions. Each workshop had a specific focus. The first week included icebreakers and discussing individual passions beyond sport, second week was student-athlete expectations and time management, third week was learning styles/stress management, fourth week was ethics, and the final week was goal setting.

I found my experience of the workshops to be educational and perception shifting in many ways. At first, I was disappointed by the overall lack of SA engagement and regard of the workshops as a waste of time. Not unlike my disappointment toward unengaged students in regular classes. However, it is important to consider that these workshops were at the end of the day, from 6-7 or 7-8 depending on the group. After a full day of strength/conditioning, class, and practice, I can fully appreciate not wanting to

attend these classes. In spite of my personal excitement at being involved with this program, I also struggled to be fully engaged at times due to my own exhausting schedule. There was also an underlying tension to the classes being mandatory but also not necessarily valued. During this same time, I was taking a class in the psychology department with a cohort of Sport Psychology MA's. In a class of 25, approximately 18 had been DI varsity athletes at various universities. During a discussion about CHAMPS/LifeSkills, many expressed that it was a joke or dummy requirement where all they had to do was show up and sign in. Others, who attended the workshops, agreed it was a waste of time with mediocre teachers and topics. While SAs at our school were "required" to attend, there were a host of reasons that exempted them from attending.

Significant time and effort were put into organizing and designing the workshops, but there was no underlying sense of importance or value to these sessions. It was simply something that had to be done. From my position, it wasn't clear what coaches thought about the workshops. There were no real consequences for missing the sessions, no potential loss of eligibility, scholarship, or playing time. As discussed by the former athletes in my sport psychology class, it was more of a show than a concrete educational experience. While on one hand I could see great potential if these classes actually provoked solid discussion about pressing SA issues, on the other the planning and schedule did not support engagement. As much as I wanted to be critical of the SAs for not taking these important issues more seriously, I could not ignore that many of them were literally dragging themselves in at night after long and tiring days.

The FYT was important to me as I was very interested in working with transition programs in the future both in collegiate and professional sports. These programs focused on introducing athletes to the sport cultures that would constitute their daily experience. One of the catalysts that led me to this line of research is my belief that many of the negatives that take place in sport culture (e.g., cheating, rape, violence, DUIs, bankruptcy) occur because athletes are not effectively educated and prepared to survive in big business sport culture, especially at the young age many enter into it. Upon reviewing the workshop schedule, I asked Rachel if there was a session or additional talk addressing sexual violence. She said no because the last couple talks had gone badly based on the approach of the speakers. The former speakers were perceived to be too aggressive/accusatory toward the athletes, saying athletes were more likely to commit acts of sexual violence. Rachel disagreed with this sentiment, saying there was no evidence to back it up. She also claimed these talks were more necessary for football and basketball programs (our institution had basketball but no football). She then stated that the workshops were meant to be educational but ultimately they wanted to keep them light and fun. I struggled a bit with this take on the workshops, especially in regard to the topic of sexual violence.

Madison (2006) “contends that critical ethnography is always a meeting of multiple sides in an encounter with and among the Other(s), one in which there is negotiation and dialogue toward substantial viable meanings that make a difference in the Other’s world” (p. 9). If I were in class, I would most likely have challenged this position directly, drawing on evidence of sexual deviance in athletics/sports to advocate

for the necessity of workshops addressing heavy but pressing issues in collegiate sport as well as sport in general. However, I didn't feel that was appropriate here. I respected Rachel's experience in spite of disagreeing with her position, which led me to pause my initial reaction and more fully consider her perspective. Face to face interactions such as these are integral to putting theory into practice. Bahktin (1984) asserted, "The most important acts constituting self-consciousness are determined by a relationship toward another consciousness" (p. 287). When I am alone reading and writing, I can say with relative ease that I wholeheartedly support Bahktin's ideas about dialogue and interactions with Others. However, supporting his ideas when my personal beliefs and passions are directly challenged face-to-face is far more difficult; especially when, from my perspective, the opposing belief hurts people. Rather than a challenge of beliefs, I tried to look at the discursive struggle as a matter of context. I agreed that a speaker who was unable to effectively address the population and topic could absolutely do more harm than good. And even though I disagreed with keeping the workshops light and fun, when considering the challenges SAs faced through the culture, I decided that perhaps these workshops were not the place to address such important issues. Given their scheduled time at the end of a long day, keeping the workshops light and fun made a lot of sense. However, I still believed SAs absolutely needed education on heavier topics but via an alternate method. At a regional NCAA meeting I attended that fall, I would find out that many SAS departments felt this was an important topic that should be addressed but struggled to find the right speakers.

Dialectics of student-athlete identity through the FYT practice and SAS.

Similar to the textbooks, advising/registration, and study hall practices, I found two dialectics animating student-athlete identity: *student-athlete* and *similarity-difference* and one dialectic animating student-athlete identity through support: *empowering-enabling-compliance*. In regard to the FYT practice the dialectics arose in different ways because the FYT is geared to support SAs with respect to the athletic experience. Thus, centering the athletic experience is part of its purpose. Although the workshops were generally relevant to the larger student-body, these workshops focused on the topics as they articulated with the athletic experience. In the case of the FYT, I believe that focusing on how the athletic experience affects the academic and overall collegiate experience is both necessary and appropriate.

Dialectic of student-athlete. The dialectic of *student-athlete* was constituted through the DSF and the DAF the sites of the distal already-spoken and the distal not-yet-spoken through the topics and foci of the workshops.

Cultural discourses (distal already-spoken, distal not-yet-spoken). The dialectic of *student-athlete* was primarily given voice through the cultural discourses circulating in the workshop topics as they related specifically to SAs. Discursive struggle arose at the site of the distal already-spoken through cultural discourses invoked to assist in socializing the SAs into collegiate and collegiate sport culture while addressing challenges and issues of balance that arise. As such, both the DSF and the DSA were given voice as SAs discussed the challenges of balancing academic and athletic commitments. Discursive struggle also arose at the site of the distal not-yet-spoken as

the FYT program also addressed the image SAs were expected to present to the campus and larger community. Both the DSF and DSA were given voice through discussions of conduct in relation to SA issues in the larger collegiate sport culture. The DSF was primarily given voice in the workshops through the formal statements I have reviewed throughout my explanation of the practices. The workshop on SA expectations addressed the SA Manual and NCAA regulations. The DSF was also constituted through the study habits workshop and emphasizing the importance of effectively managing one's schedule. The DAF was constituted through the overarching focus of the workshops in relation to the athletic experience as well as the importance of academics and compliance in regard to eligibility. Because the FYT workshops were less structured than the other practices discussed, the DAF and DSF were invoked more equally. The workshops were largely activity and discussion based and encouraged SAs to discuss their athletic experience in relation to academics and their academic experience in relation to athletics. The workshops focused on the importance of both identities in considering themselves as students and athletes rather than student-athletes. This focus proved to be beneficial, from my observation, as the term student-athlete tends to center the athletic experience.

Dialectic of similarity-difference. The dialectic of *similarity-difference* was invoked primarily at the site of the distal already-already spoken in the cultural discourses of the SA experience and the proximal not-yet-spoken and distal not-yet-spoken in regard to how SAs should interact with SAS, their teachers, and the general public.

Cultural discourses (distal already-spoken, distal not-yet-spoken). The dialectic of similarity-difference was invoked at the site of the distal already-spoken and the distal not-yet-spoken through cultural understandings of how SAs must negotiate the athletic experience differently than the usual college experience given the already understood policies and in expectation of representing team and university to campus community and society. Discursive struggle arose between the DS and the DD as distinctions were made between the SA and the average student in relation based on issues of compliance and expectations of conduct. Social media was heavily discussed in terms of what types of pictures and messages were being posted on Facebook and Twitter. SAs must think of themselves as extensions of their team and university identity and act accordingly. For example, the average student could post a funny picture of drinking at a party with friends without repercussion. However, if an SA posted such a picture, it not only reflected poorly on the team and institution but demonstrated violation of the alcohol policy. The workshops gave voice to the DS in contextualizing SAs within the larger student population as young individuals experiencing the academic and social aspects of collegiate life. At the same time the workshops gave voice to the DD to remind SAs that even though they were like other college students in this way, they were bound to a different set of rules and therefore must negotiate the college experience differently.

Relational discourses (proximal not-yet-spoken). The dialectic was also invoked at the site of the proximal not-yet-spoken through discussions regarding interactions with teachers and classroom conduct as an SA. Discursive struggle arose as voice was given to the DS in anticipation of challenges giving voice to the DD regarding negative

stereotypes of SAs in the classroom. Through the workshops, negative stigmas were discussed so that SAs could challenge stereotypes by invoking the DS through early interactions with teachers. SAs were expected to submit travel letters to teachers during the first week of class and make arrangements in advance for academic responsibilities when competition required class absences. They were additionally asked to consider their classroom behavior with respect to its reflection on their team and the athletic program. SAs were encouraged to challenge the DD invoked through negative stereotypes of the dumb or disengaged jock by being proactive regarding missed classes/assignments and displaying model behavior in the classroom (e.g., arriving on time, sitting in the front, mixing in with other students rather than sitting with other SAs).

Dialectic of empowering-enabling-compliance. The dialectic of *empowering-enabling-compliance* was constituted through the DSEP, DSEB, and the DSC and was primarily invoked through cultural discourses in the discussion of the everyday practices as they were reviewed with the SAs. The DSEP was invoked through informing SAs that they were responsible to take the initiative through the majority of practices as well as being responsible for academic and NCAA compliance. The DSEB was primarily discussed for the purpose of negating it and stating that while other athletic departments may enable SAs, we would not. The DSC was invoked through reminders of NCAA and institutional policy. SAs were directed to pertinent rules and procedures located in the SA Manual as well as the SAS website. Within the workshops, discursive struggle arose between the DSEP and the DSEB as the responsibility of SAs in regard to academic and athletic commitments were discussed. Drawing on the language of the practices within

the SA manuals the DSEP was centered and the DSEB was marginalized. The DSC was present through discussions of compliance however it was not positioned in competition with either the DSEP or the DSEB. The DSEP and the DSC were given equal voice through the workshops.

In this section I have detailed my internship experience as it pertained to the everyday practices that animated student-athlete identity through structure. I have identified and described the dialectics I observed animating student-athlete identity and the discourses constituting the dialectics as well as discussing how the dialectics are interconnected. Through each section I have discussed the presence of discursive struggle, or interplay, at various sites of the utterance chain. In the next section, I use contrapuntal analysis to look at each of the dialectics discussed to examine how the struggle of discourses constitutes meanings of student-athlete identity. By examining how the competing discourses are positioned in relation to one another and how the various discourses interpenetrate (push against or mix together), we can more fully understand how meaning arises through discursive struggle (Baxter, 2011).

Analyzing Interplay in the Discursive Struggles of Student-Athlete Identity

RQ1 and RQ3 were posed to better understand how the dialectics, through the interplay of discourses, gave rise to meaning in student-athlete identity. And further, how this discursive interplay might specifically inform community members. Through the above analysis I identified and described the primary dialectics, constituted through multiple and mostly competing discourses, that I found animating student-athlete identity. Through a contrapuntal analysis, in this section, I look specifically at how the interplay of

discourses also gave rise to student-athlete identity. In other words, I seek to further illuminate the discursive struggles occurring within the dialectics. To review, I found two primary dialectics animating student-athlete identity directly: *student-athlete*, constituted through the discourse of student-athlete as student first (DSF) and the discourse of student-athlete as athlete first (DAF), and *similarity-difference*, constituted through the discourse of student-athlete as similar to the larger student body (DS) and the discourse of student-athlete as different from the student body (DDD). I also found one primary dialectic animating student-athlete identity through student-athlete support: *empowering-enabling-compliance*, constituted through the discourse of student-athlete support through empowering (DSEP), the discourse of student-athlete support through enabling (DSEB), and the discourse of student-athlete support through compliance (DSC). In the following section I discuss the positioning of the competing discourses through the lens of RDT as well as my experience of observing the discursive struggle when relevant. As I move through each section, I also address student-athlete identity in relation to RQ1 and RQ3.

Discursive Struggle #1: Student-Athlete

The dialectic of *student-athlete* was particularly complex because it was both dialogically contractive and expansive; the term itself functioned to solely privilege the DSF while simultaneously invoking competing discourses of the DSF and the DAF.

Dialogically contractive positioning. Through the history of collegiate athletics, we understand that the term student-athlete was not meant to be a discursive struggle between the DSF and the DAF; rather it was created to deny the idea of struggle and

imbue a harmonious and balanced relationship between the two identities. It was coined specifically by the NCAA “to substitute for such words as *players* and *athletes*” to avoid the both/and pairing (Byers, 1995, p. 69). Put another way, the term student-athlete was created to constitute a monologic and authoritative discourse that naturalized student and athlete identities as compatible and student-centered. *Naturalization* is a dialogically contractive practice that positions a discourse “as a given” or “a transparent representation” of the way things are (Baxter, 2011, p. 171). Thus the term was intended to imply that student-athletes are naturally students first because that is what the term, by definition, means.

At the site of the distal already-spoken, within the existing cultural discourses, the dialectic student-athlete was largely invoked to center the DSF as an authoritative discourse for the purpose of denying its dialogic potential and disqualifying the DAF. This discursive work was primarily constituted through the formal statement and contractual language of the NCAA which served as the authority and governess of collegiate sport. One example involved the Principle of Overall Educational Experience, “It is the responsibility of each member institution to establish and maintain an environment in which a student-athlete’s activities are conducted as an integral part of the student-athlete’s educational experience (NCAA, 2.2.1, Appendix B). Another example involved the Principle of Amateurism:

Student-athletes shall be amateurs in an intercollegiate sport, and their Participation should be motivated primarily by education and by the physical, mental and social benefits to be derived. Student participation in intercollegiate athletics is an avocation, and student-athletes should be protected from exploitation by professional and commercial enterprises.
(NCAA 2.9, Appendix B)

In both principles, the dialectic student-athlete was used to privilege the DSF and underscore the centering of educational experience. By centering the educational experience, the principles disqualified notions that athletic expectations competed with the educational experience. Because the NCAA DI Manual represented a legal and binding contract for both Institution and student-athlete, the DAF was positioned as a monologic discourse “fused with tradition and authority that affords it a taken-for-granted status” functioning with “hard-edged finality as truth” (Baxter, p. 125). Challenges to the DSF were negated by the NCAA through the principles that naturalize the discourse, essentially saying that they always have and always will prioritize and protect the educational experience of the student-athlete first.

Similar work was done at the site of the distal already-spoken and the proximal not-yet-spoken during the negotiation of the relationship between the student-athlete and the institution through the language constituting student-athlete identity and expectations:

Student-athletes are first and foremost students who are highly committed to both their academic and athletic lives. Balancing those areas can be both challenging and exciting. Student-Athlete Support provides academic services designed to help create that balance. . . Our student-athletes have proven their ability to balance demands in the classroom and in the athletic arena. (SA Manual, Appendix A)

Here the dialectic student-athlete was invoked to privilege the DSF and naturalize the idea that balancing academic and athletic commitments is both feasible and achievable. In addition to the manual, language giving voice to the DSF was also invoked at the site of the proximal not-yet-spoken when recruiting athletes and their parents in anticipation of the struggle between athletic and academic commitments (i.e., “your child’s education

is our top priority”). After a student-athlete joined the institution the discourse was further constituted at the site of the proximal already-spoken through the contracts signed with the institution and NCAA acknowledging the principles and guidelines, which established a relational history acknowledging the DSF. Work here was also done at the site of the distal already-spoken as staff members pointed to the reported speech of the NCAA or SA manuals to give voice to cultural discourses of the DSF.

Dialogically expansive positioning. The dialectic *student-athlete* was also dialogically expansive, allowing for multiple discourses to emerge, because it was created to silence the DAF for the specific purpose of denying student-athletes employment status within the university and alleviating the university and NCAA from work-related injury cost and compensation as well as sharing profits with student-athletes (Byers, 1995). Thus, the dialectic student-athlete also implicates discursive struggle as it was created not only to deny existing challenges to the DSF but also to render future challenges as irrelevant. The struggle is synchronic because the term implicates the “co-occurrence of multiple discourses at a given point in time” (Baxter, 2011, p. 131). Any use of the term always and already implicates a dialectic—varying discourses of student and athlete presented as student-athlete, even and especially at the time when the term was created to constitute an authoritative position. As described in the previous section, the dialectic *student-athlete* is constituted through competing discourses of the DSF and the DAF.

Discursive interplay occurred along two dimensions: *direct-indirect* which involves the extent to which discourses are openly engaged through direct invocation or

indirectly engaged through ambiguous tactics and *hidden polemic interplay* where discourses are de-centered or marginalized without being directly discussed through talk (Baxter, 2011). Baxter explained that dimensional discursive struggles are not necessarily mutually exclusive or “neat and tidy” (p. 132). The discursive interplay at work in student-athlete identity demonstrated the blurring of discursive positions.

Direct-indirect interplay. The dialectic of *student-athlete* revealed both direct and indirect struggle. The struggle was direct because the term was created to privilege the DSF and directly challenge and refute the DAF. The dialectic additionally demonstrated direct struggle as the DSF was invoked through the various principles and policies in the NCAA and institutional manuals as a monologic discourse. Both manuals are presented as authoritative and binding in regard to the principles and policies. When the NCAA and institutional manuals state that student-athletes are students first and foremost, this statement is meant to be taken for granted with no room for challenge. The struggle was also indirect because the syntax of the term brings two separate discourses together as one without directly acknowledging the struggle of the discourses. By bringing *student* and *athlete* together into *student-athlete* for the sole purpose of denying the joining of the terms through the use of *and*, indirect struggle occurs through the deliberate denial of struggle.

Hidden polemic struggle. Discursive interplay also occurred through hidden polemic struggle when the DAF was invoked indirectly to de-center the DSF, not through direct talk or policies and principles but through the structure of the everyday practices. The DSF dominated the language constituting student-athlete identity through the NCAA

and SA Manuals. Such language reified the idea that student-athletes could and should be empowered to responsibly and successfully manage academic and athletic responsibilities while privileging their education. However, I found that the enactment of the everyday practices, through the structures of signification, centered the DAF and marginalized the DSF.

As previously discussed, an integral component of any type of education involves learning through one's mistakes. This is an idea that is not only present in our cultural discourses of learning and education but an idea also supported in my personal student and teaching experiences. When we make mistakes, and are accountable to those mistakes by accepting responsibility and facing the consequences, we learn and grow. Through my intern experience, I found that in spite of all the programming and the talks and the language and policies that privilege the educational experience, responsibility, and empowering of student-athletes through the student first discourse, considerable effort and great lengths are taken to minimize the opportunity for student-athletes to make mistakes that might cost the institution and hinder athletic participation. Through advising and registration, study hall, tutoring, and textbooks, hours upon hours of multiple staff were spent following rigid procedures and practices to ensure the mistakes of student-athletes were minimized for the purpose of protecting athletic participation. For example, in regard to advising and registration, the language of the practice stated, "All student-athletes are ultimately responsible for completing the requirements that will lead to a degree and are required to meet with their major advisors each quarter to ensure these requirements are being met" (SAS, Appendix A). The statement suggests that the

responsibility of maintaining academic eligibility is the responsibility of the SA. Yet, the structure of the advising and registration practice demonstrated strong evidence to the contrary.

Reflecting on my experience of this practice, responsibility was not left solely to the SA as stated in the language of the practice. The structure and process of advising and registration was geared to heard the SAs through advising and registration and seek out those straying off course. Each term master lists of each SA were printed and we worked through every single name on the list. For each person I met with, it was my responsibility to record what classes they were planning to take, their major if declared and progression toward major requirements. It was further my responsibility to determine whether or not the student-athletes had met with their assigned academic advisors and, if not, to remind them to do so. If I did not have a detailed record of each meeting with a student, I would have to answer for information exchanged. Each of the practices observed had a similar structure and purpose that silently countered the DSF by employing specific actions to maintain athletic participation and eligibility. Although the language of the practices indicated that SAs were educationally driven students first who successfully balanced their academic and athletic commitments, the enactment of the practices spearheaded and facilitated the process to ensure SAs fulfilled academic obligations to protect the athletic experience. If not to protect the athletic experience, then why not truly empower the SAs to take responsibility and initiative and deal with consequences when mistakes were made?

The other practices also reflected hidden polemic struggle. The study hall language stated that SAs were ultimately responsible for making sure their hours were completed on time, yet the burden of responsibility to record, oversee, and maintain hours in addition to enforcing rules fell on the study hall monitor, not the SA. In regard to tutoring, the NCAA does not mandate specialized tutoring arrangements by the athletic department but it does say that athletic departments may allocate money in this area for additional support (NCAA 16.3.1.1, Appendix B). SAs could very easily be directed to on campus tutoring resources to empower them to seek out and enlist tutoring assistance on their own. However, the institution allocates money and staff to carry out a specialized structure of tutoring practices to minimize potential costly mistakes that violate NCAA regulations such as accepting gifts from tutors and to ensure SAs have the best opportunity to remain eligible. Additionally, rules regulating where, when, and how long SAs may be tutored are employed to specifically protect the athletic experience. Although the SAS description of the tutoring process stated that the responsibility lay with the student-athlete, the burden of the process falls largely on the staff.

I observed multiple occasions when the alleged responsibility of the SA fell on Rachel or Dion. An SA who failed to complete study hall hours, or effectively register for classes on time, or failed to properly negotiate the tutoring process was brought down on Rachel or Dion as if it were their fault. And additionally, it often became their responsibility to make it right even when the SA had clearly dropped the ball, sometimes several times. The enormous amount of work that goes into ensuring that SAs adhere to NCAA regulations to maintain eligibility makes a bold yet unspoken statement that

although the institution officially privileges the DSF through mission and policy, this discourse is challenged through the structure of everyday practices. Instead, the structure of everyday practices constituted the DAF, demonstrating through enactment that SAs were not to be entrusted with the responsibility to successfully negotiate their academic and athletic responsibilities. If educational experience was truly privileged as stipulated in the discourse, SAs would be educated and empowered to navigate the difficulty of balancing responsibilities with room to make mistakes and learn. However, everyday practices employed to minimize and smooth over mistakes, and ensure eligibility for athletic participation at the cost of the educational experience suggest that the athletic experience is ultimately centered.

Implications of Student-Athlete Identity

The discursive struggles of the DSF and the DAF speak to the complexity of student-athlete identity. Student-athlete identity is overwhelmingly perceived through the DSF in spite of the challenge of the DAF. Through the discussion of the practices, we can observe the discursive power of the DSF based on its authoritative and contractive positioning through the official language of policies. In examining how discourses were invoked through the structures of the everyday practice, we can observe the latent power of the DAF that rises silently through process and procedure at the same time the DSF is firmly asserted through official policies. Although the student-athlete was created to deny discursive struggle, my findings speak to an ongoing battle just below the surface of the everyday lives of student-athletes. The significant struggle that occurs between policy and practice and the revealed power of the DAF shows that the life of the student

athlete is overwhelmingly dominated by their athletic participation. Nearly every aspect of academic support is oriented through eligibility and compliance. Thus the perceived and presented balance of the student and athlete identities is negated through the everyday structures of practice.

Community members hoping to bring more balance in efforts to center the educational experience should be mindful of the power of the DAF within everyday practices. No matter how much the DSF is verbally stated and reinforced, the day to day experience of SAs is centered around their athletic experience. If possible, community members should actively work to return advising responsibilities solely over to academic departments and programs. Tutoring should also be removed from the athletic department. Study hall could be re-envisioned to naturally develop quality study habits and avoid the excessive rules and monitoring. If athletic departments are resistant to changing these practices, community members can actively work to speak to and support the academic identity and experience of the student-athlete as much as possible. It is first important for SAs and support staff to acknowledge the power of the DAF in relation to the power of the DSF in terms of their daily experience. Staff could engage SAs in important conversations about how they perceive their academic identity and the extent to which they feel their educational experience is prioritized. Then SAs and staff could work together to devise new practices to help prioritize academics within the confines of the rigorous athletic schedule.

Discursive Struggle #2: Similarity-Difference

Student-athlete identity was also animated through the dialectic of *similarity-difference*. This dialectic was constituted through the DS and the DD. The dialectic of similarity-difference was invoked at various sites of the utterance chain. Discursive struggle revealed both direct and indirect struggle as well as hidden polemic interplay.

Dialogically expansive positioning. The dialectic of *similarity-difference* was always dialogically expansive. Although there are many ways in which SAs are similar to the larger student body, because they must purchase textbooks, navigate advising/registration, have access to tutoring and dedicated study areas and academic related programming they are also different because separate and distinctive processes have been set up just for them. Thus, in spite of discourses of similarity, discourses of difference were always present.

Direct-indirect struggle. At the site of the distal already-spoken, the DS was primarily given voice through the language of the NCAA and SA Manuals that also gave voice to the DSF. At this site, discursive work was done to position athletes as similar to the larger student body. Through the NCAA manual, discursive work was done in policies that indicated SAs were free to engage in academic support through resources available to all students. For example, by NCAA mandate:

Member institutions shall make general academic counseling and tutoring services available to all student-athletes. Such counseling and tutoring services may be provided by the department of athletics or the institution's nonathletics student support services. In addition, an institution, conference or the NCAA may finance other academic support, career counseling or personal development services that support the success of student-athletes.
(NCAA 16.3.3.1, Appendix B)

Based on this policy, the practices of academic advising and tutoring could be implemented solely through existing campus resources available to all students, but institutions are also permitted to allocate funds to provide additional support through the athletic department. Through this language, the NCAA invokes the DSF and the DS by centering the educational experience and assimilating it to the experience of the general student body. However, the DD is also present by providing the opportunity and potential for additional and separate services. The DAF is also indirectly invoked here as the perceived need for separate implies the importance of the athletic experience.

Direct struggle also occurs through the practice of priority registration. The DD is invoked through allowing SAs to register for classes prior to other students. The SA Manual states that this practice serves the purpose of aiding SAs in balancing academic and athletic commitments. Many other students balancing school, work, family, and extra-curricular opportunities would also benefit from registering early, yet no other students on campus are afforded this privilege. Thus the implementation of priority registration centers the DS by saying that the balancing act of SAs is different from other students and necessitates a separate practice. Priority registration also indirectly gives voice to the DAF and the importance of athletics by implying that athletic participation is more important than the activities other students must balance.

Hidden polemic interplay. While the DS was centered through the language of the manuals, the DD arose in the everyday practices. Hidden polemic interplay was revealed between language and practice. Each practice employed by the athletic department was also available in some manner to the greater student body. Thus SAs

could feasibly receive academic advising solely from academic advisors and get tutoring help through the academic services in place. The possibility of SAs integrating with the larger student body in this way invoked the DS. However, additional advising and tutoring services were facilitated through the athletic department which invoked the DD. As indicated in the discussion of advising and tutoring, the differences between the services offered through the athletic department and the established services on campus invoke the DAF. The additional athletic department services offer no further academic purpose other than to ensure academic progress is in accordance with eligibility for athletic participation.

If the educational experience was indeed centered and similarity was a priority then efforts would be made to facilitate integration and minimize difference wherever possible. SAs would be sufficiently educated and empowered to assimilate through these practices and negotiate advising and tutoring solely through academic resources. However, the practices employed through the athletic department are both separate and distinct from those available to all students. Rather than serving to integrate SAs with the larger student population, these practices contribute to further segregation. In the case of academic textbooks, SAs went through a separate process alongside other students in the bookstore that served as a visual reminder that SAs were different from other students and required a separate process. In the case of advising and priority registration, even though SAs could satisfy their academic needs solely through their academic advisors, they must negotiate an additional and separate process with their athletic counselors. Further, priority registration is another separate and distinctive practice that served as a

constant reminder to other students that SAs are different and receive additional privileges because of their athletic participation. Each practice gives voice to the DD and centers the athletic experience. The structures and processes of the separate practices above and beyond the resources available to the larger student body distinctly work to protect and preserve the athletic experience.

Implications of Student-Athlete Identity

The discursive struggles of the DS and the DD suggest that SAs are continually negotiating issues of similarity and difference in regard to the larger student population. Within their student and athlete identities SAs are very much the same as other students with respect to being young adults entering the college experience. The majority are moving away from home for the first time, meeting new people, facing the college experience, wondering about comes after graduation. In many important ways, SAs are just like their fellow students. At the same time, they are different because their athletic participation drives their experience and they are bound by different sets of rules than the larger student body. They are primarily put in dorms with their teammates or other athletes and spend an inordinate amount of time with their teammates and athletics staff based on their practice and training schedules. They are often required to dine together either for team meals or based on similarity of schedule. They are largely identified in relation to their team and teammates based on issued team apparel that is often convenient and sometimes required to wear. In many ways, they are prevented from integrating with non-athletes because of their athletic participation. Additionally, the implementation of academic support (i.e., study hall, advising and registration, textbooks,

tutoring) through the athletic department further segregates them from the traditional college experience and inhibits their ability to socialize with other students. Thus issues of similarity and difference are primarily oriented through their athletic participation. While they are both similar and different, the impetus of their difference stems from their athletic commitment.

Community members wanting to facilitate the integration of SAs and minimize difference where possible can learn from the discursive struggle of the DS and the DD. First, the movement of academic support to the sole responsibility of academic departments and programs represents a huge step in facilitating integration and minimizing difference. Negotiating tutoring through on campus resources outside the purview of the athletic department enables SAs to further integrate across campus and feel empowered to take initiative in the academic success. SAs already meet with academic advisors so dissolving athletics based academic counseling frees up time in the SAs already hectic schedule as well as freeing up numerous hours for SAS staff to focus on other areas of SAS more appropriate to the athletic department such as expanding CHAMPS/LifeSkills or devoting more free hours to drop-in counseling or developing programming that facilitates SA integration with other clubs and groups on campus. Re-envisioning study hall to facilitate integration and the natural development of study habits would also allocate more time and resources for SAS staff to assist in balancing academic and athletic identities and priorities. If changing these practices is not possible or until it is, community members can work to bring visibility and dialogue to how athletic participation serves to segregate SAs from the larger student body and consider how to

create more balance and integration within the constraints of athletic participation. The key lies in acknowledging the powerful presence of the DAF and the DD in relation to athletic identity and participation and working toward balance from that recognition rather than relying on the existing cultural discourses that constitute student-athlete identity through the DSF and the DS.

Discursive Struggle #3: Empowering-Enabling-Compliance

Student-athlete identity was also animated through student-athlete support. The dialectic of *empowering-enabling-compliance* was constituted through the DSEP, the DSEB, and the DSC. The dialectic was primarily invoked through the language and structure of the everyday practices at various sites of the utterance chain in both cultural and relational discourses. Interplay revealed direct, indirect, and hidden polemic struggle.

Dialogically expansive positioning. The DSEP, the DSEB, and the DSC were all present within the language and practice of SAS. My initial meetings with Dion invoked the DSEP and the DSEB as we discussed support practices. While not always directly invoked, the DSC was always present as compliance was an ongoing and central issue.

Direct-indirect struggle. The DSEP and the DSEB were primarily invoked simultaneously through both cultural and relational discourses. The DSEB was given central voice in popular discourse and current affairs as ongoing issues of academic misconduct were prevalent. During my initial meetings with Dion, she specifically gave voice to the DSEP to de-center the DSEB in cultural discourses as well as in the

relational discourses and past practices of the institution. She alluded to past practices of enabling within SAS without getting into detail, but focused on the effort to provide more enabling support. Whenever we spoke about providing support, the importance of the DSEP was centered.

The DSC was never directly invoked as a part of providing support. It was always just beneath the surface of our conversations. For example, during advising I had to keep a detailed log of SAs I met with and the particulars of our conversation (i.e., APR, course schedule, degree progress) yet the purpose was not discussed as a compliance issue. The focus of our discussions regarding advising gave voice to the DSEP in that, if the SA did not show up with the necessary paperwork and prepared to lead the discussion, the meeting would wait until (s)he was prepared. However, my responsibilities regarding the meeting invoked the DSC as they were geared specifically toward monitoring compliance.

Hidden polemic interplay. The discursive struggle of the DSEP, the DSEB, and the DSC primarily occurred through hidden polemic interplay as the language and intentions of SAS were challenged by the structure of the support practices and the ever-looming issue of compliance. At the site of the distal already-spoken and proximal not-yet-spoken, the DSEP was given voice through the language of the SA Manual which presented the SA experience as one that centered the educational experience and expected the SA to take responsibility and initiative in maintaining academic requirements. The language of the study hall, textbook, advising/registration, and tutoring practices all discursively placed responsibility in the hands of the SAs and privileged the DSEP.

The everyday implementation of the practices through structure and process conversely gave voice to the DSEB and the DSC. Although the DSEB and the DSC largely served the same purpose in privileging the DAF and the athletic experience they were perceived in different ways. The DSEB was positioned as a negative way of providing support while the DSC was positioned as a necessary function of the athletic department. However, I perceived the two as identical in practice although verbally differentiated. The struggle between empowering, enabling, and compliance primarily took place between empowering and compliance. The intention of empowering SAs was continually complicated by compliance. The necessity of compliance shifted supportive efforts from empowering to enabling. As I have previously suggested, both advising and tutoring could be effectively removed from the athletic department and solely provided through academic departments. This opportunity is not only permitted by the NCAA but already in place on campus. SAs already meet with their academic advisors and already have access to additional advising services on campus as well as tutoring services. The system is already in place to empower SAs to focus on academics and integrate with the larger student body by receiving advising and tutoring solely from academic departments and services. However additional services, housed in the athletic department, are in place for the sole purpose of monitoring and facilitating academic compliance and eligibility. The presence of the additional services, in spite of the empowering efforts made within those services, invoke the DSEB through the DSC and de-center the DSEP.

Based on my observations, I found the two advising services to be particularly confusing and detrimental to the advising experience. It also created tension between

SAS and academic departments as there was often lack of communication. For example, there was an ongoing issue between SAS and a couple of academic departments regarding the availability of professors when SAs claimed they could not locate their advisors. I found the SAs to be detrimentally reliant on their SAS advisors to take care of issues that they should be handling on their own. For example, if at first you can't locate/contact your advisor, seek assistance through the department like everyone else rather than bringing in an athletics advisor. Because of the structure in place, some SAs knew that they could be lackadaisical in their approach to advising and registration. They didn't have to be aware of the important date and times because somebody would always make sure they had the information through repeated emails and calls and even calls to coaches. All of the extra measures taken to "help" SAs through registration and advising were geared to facilitate compliance and protect participation but strongly prevented empowerment. Unfortunately the SAS staff members tend to get caught amidst this discursive struggle. They truly want to empower SAs but ultimately are responsible for compliance. Thus the centering of the DSAC, as currently implemented through the structure of practice, made it impossible for the DSEP to truly be privileged.

Student-Athlete Identity Implications

The struggle of the DSEP, DSEB and DSC arguably has a detrimental effect on student-athlete identity, especially in regard to legitimizing and supporting their academic identity and overall academic experience. The structures are everyday support practices are predominately geared to ensure (to the highest degree possible) that compliance is followed and eligibility is maintained. Empowerment occurs through independence and

responsibility. The structures prevent independence and responsibility. For example, if one is empowered to be responsible for advising and registration and one forgets, then one must accept with responsibility and deal with the consequences, hopefully learning a valuable lesson for next time (although sometimes it takes more than one mistake).

However, the practices do not allow this to happen. Every SA is on a list that is checked and re-checked with respect to deadlines. If an SA forgets, (s)he will receive reminders from various staff. Significant efforts will be made to contact the SA and take care of business. In spite of all the empowering messages and encouraging SAs to take responsibility, they all know they don't have to take that responsibility. They might get in trouble or a stern chat, but ultimately many are very aware of the importance of their athletic participation, especially for star players. They know there will always be somebody checking up and helping them take care of responsibilities. Not all SAs take advantage of the structure; however, the structure does not promote or instill confidence either and thus serves to privilege the DSEB and DSC while de-centering the DSEP much to the detriment and disadvantage of the SAs educational experience.

Compliance is a major concern for athletic departments which renders the DSC dominant in every athletic department. Community members need to be aware of how discursive struggle arises between the DSEP and the DSC and work to make this struggle visible to SAs. Again, moving academic support back to academic departments and programs will largely facilitate this effort. I also strongly suggest that SAs take an NCAA compliance class during the summer prior to officially matriculating. I don't believe SAs are being given the opportunity to be empowered and take responsibility of

their academic and athletic responsibilities. In order to do this, they need to be sufficiently educated about NCAA compliance in a formal setting. For me, it makes sense to offer this education through an academic course with credit (I discuss this class further in chapter five). Coaches and SAS staff need to make it clear that this class is vital to their responsibilities as SAs and empower them to take initiative through education. This type of class not only offers a bridge between academics and athletics but actually positions education as a means to sport participation in a way that ultimately centers the educational experience. For SAs who are entering college less engaged or less prepared than the average student, this preliminary education offers an important introductory experience that intertwines academics and athletics in a meaningful ways that could both spark an interest in school via relevant sport curriculum and begin building important classroom skills by drawing on the athletic knowledge base⁷.

Revisiting the Research Questions

RQ1 asked to identify the competing discourses constituting student-athlete identity through everyday practices and consider how discursive interplay gives rise to the meaning(s) of student-athlete identity. Specifically, I wanted to understand how the struggle of competing discourses created and complicated understandings of student-athlete identity. Baxter (2011) called for future RDT research to pay more attention to “the particular ways in which meaning is wrought from the process of discursive struggle” (p. 121). My findings indicate that the interconnected discursive struggles of student-athlete identity primarily occur in indirect and hidden dimensions. The DSF, DS,

⁷ Sport curriculum and translating sport skills to academic skills further discussed in chapter five

and DSEP are given a great deal of power through dominant discursive positioning within and through the statements and policies of the NCAA and institutional manual. They stand to say, “This is the way see student-athletes and conduct our program.” The presence of this language in official policies serves to continually privilege the DSF, DS, and DSAEP at an authoritative level that claims to speak the truth. However, the everyday practices of student-athlete support invoke discourses contrary to those embedded in the official language. The structures of signification that guide the everyday practice and process of support services conversely invoke the DAF, DD, DSEB, and DSC. The presence of the additional and separate services, along with the substantial processes and procedures implemented to facilitate and ensure (as much as possible) eligibility and compliance challenge the alleged academic focus.

My findings show that student-athlete identity is continually contested and complicated due to the presence of multiple and competing discourses. Identity is further complicated by the power of the DSF, DS, and DSEP through the language of the NCAA and institutions. As these discourses seek to characterize student-athlete identity and collegiate sport through official statements, the everyday practices of student athletes challenge the official language and center the DAF, DD, DSAEB, and DSC. The presence of these discursive struggles complicates and confuses student-athlete identity and the everyday collegiate sport experience. Student-athletes are consistently told who they are and what their identity represents however, the structure of the practices implemented to provide support consistently challenge what is directly stated. Based on these findings, I believe it is important to bring more attention to the multiple and

competing discourses and how the discursive struggles complicate student-athlete identity. For example, how the dominance of the DSF through authoritative discourse silences the dominance of the DAF through everyday practice. Efforts to illuminate the dominance of both discourses will provide much needed insight into student-athlete identity and collegiate sport culture.

RQ2 asked how competing discourses of student-athlete identity invoke the structures within collegiate sport culture. My findings showed that it is the structures of collegiate sport that invoke competing discourses of student-athlete identity. By observing the everyday practices of SAS, it was evident that the processes constituting the practices revealed structures of signification within the system of collegiate sport. In other words, the practice and procedures of advising/priority registration, study hall, tutoring, textbooks, and FYT provided the rules and resources of communication that render the practices distinctive to and representative of collegiate sport. Through the structures of signification, each of these practices centered the importance of athletic participation and invoked discourses of student-athlete identity that privileged the athletic experience. These findings add to current literature that points to the structure of collegiate sports as problematic by explicating where problems arise. This study shows how problems arise through discursive struggles between policy and practice.

RQ3 asked how discursive interplay can inform community members to improve practice. Based on the findings, I think the first step is illuminating the discursive struggles between policy and practice. The DSF, DS, and DSEP are all given privileged voice in discussions with SAs. Yet, the DAF, DD, DSEB, and DSC dominate their daily

routines. This must be very confusing as the discursive struggle is present but not addressed. The presence of the discursive struggle between policy and practice is important not only for SAs but for SAS, faculty, the larger student-body, and society. Without acknowledging the power of all present discourses, we are unable to fully understand student-athletes and provide quality support. It is also important for the public to understand that many of the negative actions taken by SAs should not be viewed individually but as part of a broken structure. In addition to bringing the discursive struggles into various conversations, practitioners can also use the struggles to (re)envision practice. The findings emphasize the importance of moving academic advising and tutoring back to the sole guidance of academic departments and programs. Findings also suggest that the study hall practice undermines academic responsibility and should be reconceived or eliminated. I further discussed ways in which the findings can be used to inform community members to re-develop practices by first acknowledging the power of the DSF and DAF in everyday practices and actively working toward centering the educational experience when possible. More in depth support of balancing athletic and academic commitments and identities that acknowledges the overwhelming presence of the athletic experience is also needed.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

In chapter four, I addressed my research questions through a reflexive discussion of my ethnographic and contrapuntal analyses and results. In this chapter, I further discuss my questions and the implications of my findings in the context of relevant literature and my project objectives. I begin by discussing the broad implications of my findings as they relate to current conversations on student-athlete identity, collegiate sport culture, and reform. Next I discuss the theoretical implications of my project. Finally, I present the practical applications of my findings and suggestions for future research.

The Definition of Insanity: Student-Athlete Identity & Collegiate Sport Structure

Albert Einstein famously stated that the definition of insanity is to continue going about something in the same manner while expecting different results. This is the current state of collegiate athletics. The NCAA and institutions continue to stand by their discursive position that student-athletes are academically oriented students first, whereas athletic participation is secondary. Yet reformers continue the discursive position that the collegiate sport experience is athletically centered and many student-athletes struggle to access the quality education they are guaranteed. Issues of academic impropriety have historically plagued collegiate sports and continue to occur on a yearly basis, suggesting

that something is not working within the academic-athletic balance. Efforts to improve academic integrity have largely involved increasing eligibility requirements while continuing to bring in student-athletes who are unprepared and placing them in an environment that centers their athletic participation and constrains their academic experience. How can we expect academic integrity and integration to improve if we fail to change the process?

Reformers have overwhelmingly pointed to commercialism and the structure of collegiate sport as the source of ongoing issues, although the specifics of structure are rarely discussed. This project investigated the relationship between student-athlete identity and collegiate sport structure in an effort to illuminate structural issues and gain a better understanding of student-athlete identity with an eye toward helping reform efforts. Research questions one and two were designed to provoke further understanding of student-athlete identity within the dialectical and complex discursive culture of collegiate sport. Current discussions regarding student-athlete identity and the state of collegiate sport continue to support what reformers have been saying for nearly one hundred years. The big business, high profile, commercialized and commodified culture of collegiate sport is not only negatively affecting student-athletes and higher education but entire campus communities and society at large (Benford, 2007; Branch, 2011; Duderstadt, 2000; Svare, 2012; Yost, 2009). Although they are regular fixtures in popular culture and the media, student-athletes are largely misunderstood. Despite general beliefs that student-athletes are over-privileged, many face significant challenges beyond that of the general student population and are less likely to seek out support (Watson, 2006).

Although we tend to imbue privilege and status into the label *student-athlete*, studies show that many student-athletes feel social stigma associated with their identity (Harrison et al., 2009; Yopyk & Prentice, 2005) especially those whom are African-American student-athletes (Singer, 2008; Stone, Harrison, Mottley, 2012; Van Rhee, 2011).

Research shows that stigma attributed to student-athletes largely stems from perceptions of social status, actual benefits and privileges afforded to student-athletes, perceived special treatment by professors, the understanding that some student-athletes are given entrance and scholarship in spite of having lower GPA and test scores, and beliefs that student-athletes are not academically engaged and therefore undeserving of privileges (Engstrom & Sedlacek, 1991; Engstrom et al., 1995; Knapp et al., 2001; Simons et al., 2007). The amount of privilege bestowed upon student-athletes tends to overshadow the immense challenges that these individuals face. Because of their actual privileges and identity status, it's easy to forget that these young people are in fact 18-21 year olds with the weight of their team, family, university, sponsors, and fans on their shoulders. They are likely to make youthful mistakes as so many do during this transitional period to independence and adulthood. Unlike their fellow students, the mistakes of student-athletes are often publicly discussed and highly publicized. As faculty members, coaches, administrators, athletics/non-athletics campus staff, journalists, parents, and fans we do this population of individuals a great disservice when we fail to recognize that many of the troubles plaguing student-athletes are created and fueled by the structure of collegiate sport.

Findings from the current project suggest that the everyday practices of student-athlete support disrupt claims that collegiate sport structure centers the educational experience. On the contrary, the processes and procedures of athletics based academic support largely inhibit quality academic engagement and obstruct the development of skills necessary to successfully negotiate the challenges student-athletes face. Specifically, my findings demonstrate how the implementation of academic support (i.e., advising, tutoring, study hall) over and above what can be sufficiently accessed through the academic departments and programs already in place to serve the larger student body, de-centers the educational experience. The extensive procedures and additional rules of athletics based academic programming detract focus from academic engagement and center the importance of athletic participation through the meticulous monitoring of eligibility and compliance. Findings explicating the process and procedures of everyday practices show that the additional support serves no further academic function beyond the academic programs already in place. Instead, the processes, rules, and monitoring are all focused on academic progress in relation to athletic participation. With respect to the issues raised in the literature and current popular conversations, my findings indicate that many student-athletes are struggling because collegiate sport structures within their everyday experience constantly center their athletic identity and largely position academic progress as a means to athletic participation. At the same time, the NCAA and institutions, through official language and policy, invoke discourses that student-athletes are always students first who use athletic participation as a means to academic success. While student-athletes and larger society are being told, through the voice of authority,

that student-athletes are in fact always student-first, the everyday experience of student-athletes challenges this claim by centering athletic identity and experience.

The NCAA claims that collegiate sports are amateur and not professional. However, their definition of professional rests solely on the provision that student-athletes do not receive a paycheck for their athletic performance; they receive an education. Thus, their amateur status is based on the fact that they are not earning a living from their athletic works. McCormick and McCormick (2006) have argued that this faulty argument stands largely on the lack of a legal definition of amateur, which suggests this is a semantic debate rather than definitional. In other words, because we have no legal definition of amateur, professionalized works can be characterized as non-professional based on the NCAA's definition of amateur. This is inappropriate based on the clear conflict of interest between the NCAA and student-athletes regarding generated revenue. Division I college athletes are arguably professionals. The hours they have logged practicing their sport since they were small children affords them that title. The fact that only 2% of all youth sport participants will get a DI scholarship, demonstrates the professional level and specialized nature of their skills (Yost, 2009). The number of hours devoted to athletic participation daily/year-round along with the significant control coaches and institutions exert over every aspect of their daily lives categorizes them as professional laborers within the eyes of the law (McCormick & McCormick, 2006). The fact that billions of dollars are generated from their hard work and life-long dedication speaks very loudly to their status as professionals. The only thing standing between student-athletes and their rightful professional identity is the very thin argument that they

receive academic scholarships rather than paychecks and that their athletic participation is secondary to their educational experience. Scholars and reformers have challenged the value placed on the academic scholarship, arguing that the structure of collegiate sport impedes rather than enhances student-athletes ability to fully embrace and benefit from the “free” education they are given; especially for the student-athletes generating the most revenue for their universities and the NCAA (Adler & Adler, 1985, 1987; Branch; Benford, 2007; Comeaux & Harrison, 2011; Singer, 2008; Svare, 2012; Van Rhee, 2012).

My findings demonstrate the presence and power of the DAF and the DSC within structures of everyday practice and support the argument that the structure of collegiate sport centers athletic participation and hinders the educational experience. They further add to the literature by providing concrete examples of how the professed missions and principles of collegiate sport are negated through the everyday practices and processes that constitute the structure of collegiate sport (Singer, 2009; Trail & Chelladurai, 2000). For example, if the educational experience is truly centered and “a student-athlete’s activities are [to be] conducted as an integral part of the student-athlete’s educational experience,” then why are student-athletes provided priority registration to schedule classes around athletic practice and competition (NCAA 2.2.1, Appendix B)? This practice clearly centers and privileges athletic participation as the point is to minimize missed class, not to minimize missed practice or competition when scheduling conflicts arise. Additionally, if the educational experience is centered and student-athletes are to assimilate with the larger student body, then why does the athletics department provide

academic services beyond what is sufficient for the entire student population? And why are those services focused specifically on the NCAA academic compliance? Further, if support is initiated to “empower our student-athletes to take the necessary steps to be successful both in and out of the classroom,” then why are there specific measures in place that inhibit student-athletes ability to be responsible for balancing their academic and athletic responsibilities (SAS Service, Appendix A)? Unfortunately issues of compliance, along with the significant financial investment, largely impede and complicate efforts to empower student-athletes and truly center their educational experience.

Implications of Student-Athlete Identity & Structure

My findings support and contribute to the current literature on student-athlete identity in several important ways. Although ample research has pointed to problems within the structure of collegiate sport, the specific ways in which structure creates problems have not been thoroughly identified and discussed. This study revealed a direct link between structure and student-athlete identity and provided examples of how structure inhibits rather than facilitates student-athlete balance and educational growth. In other words, I did not find the additional support services proffered through the athletic department to center the educational experience. Conversely my findings showed how the processes and procedures of athletic academic support center athletic participation and eligibility in ways that complicate the educational experience.

First, my findings add to the literature on student-athlete identity and collegiate sport by demonstrating the prevalence and power of the discourse of student-athlete as

student first (DSF) through its position as an authoritative discourse. The DSF is not only privileged within the language of the manuals, but is also prevalent in society through popular and ongoing discussion of student-athletes and collegiate sport (Bennett, 2014; Ganim, 2014). NCAA representatives, athletic directors, coaches, and athletics support staff invoke the DSF to constitute student-athlete identity for the campus community and society at large. The DSF is repeatedly invoked to naturalize the harmony of student and athlete identities within the larger scope of collegiate sport culture and position the education centered student-athlete as a taken for granted assumption. Through official language and current conversations the NCAA and institutions discursively privilege and legitimize the DSF to constitute the student-athlete as one who is empowered and prepared to meet the challenge of balancing student and athletes commitments while centering the educational experience in ways that parallel the larger student population.

Second, my findings demonstrate the latent power of the discourse of student-athletes as athlete first (DAF) by showing how the structural properties (i.e., rules and resources guiding communicative action) of everyday practices in student-athlete support consistently challenge and confuse the discourses of identity asserted through cultural discourses within the language of NCAA policies and principles and institutional manuals. While discourses of empowering, balance, and integration with the larger student population pervade verbal definitions and depictions of student-athletes through NCAA and university mission statements and policies, the everyday practices implemented to support such an identity invoked competing discourses that worked to undermine the notion of the empowered, integrated, and educationally driven student-

athlete. Given the academic services already in place and available to student-athletes, the presence of additional service implies difference from rather than similarity to the larger student body and facilitates segregation rather than integration. The processes and procedures of the practices are geared to facilitate eligibility and compliance through the separate and detail-oriented practices, additional rules, and extensive monitoring, which suggest that the services are in place for athletic rather than academic purposes. For example, the academic advising practice focuses on four specific aspects of the academic experience: the APR, GPA, degree progress, and credits taken. These are compliance related criteria of academic eligibility. Efforts to empower student-athletes are thwarted by measures taken to facilitate eligibility and compliance. Each practice had dedicated monitoring measures embedded in the structure of the practice. In other words, the student-athletes were not on their own to take responsibility for their academic commitments. Every aspect of their academic experience was extensively monitored from the way they negotiated their textbook scholarships to how, when, and with whom they could study. If a student-athlete failed to show up for an advising meeting, (s)he was not left alone to accept responsibility as any other student would. Repeated emails and texts were sent and coaches were contacted. Various people were involved to avoid a compliance infraction. These extra supportive measures, while important to the institution in regard to their investment in the student-athlete and compliance, impeded student-athletes in taking initiative and responsibility for academic commitments. My findings support the Adlers' (1987) assertion that "most athletes failed to develop the

knowledge, initiative, or the interest to handle these academic matters themselves” based on the considerable guidance and monitoring of coaches and support staff (p. 447).

Third, in regard to RQ2, my finding that the processes and procedures of everyday practices represent structures of collegiate sport point to an important link between structure and identity. As my findings suggest that the structures of everyday practices center the importance of athletic participation, so do the structures of sport center the athlete identity and the DAF. This link between structure and identity represents part of the problem embedded within collegiate sport structure. Specifically, the everyday student-athlete experience and student-athlete identity are oriented by athletic commitments and participation through the structure. The discourses privileging the athletic experience through the structure overwhelmingly dominate the discourses centering the educational experience. While research has shown the negative academic effects of the student-athlete label and the salience of the athlete identity (Harrison et al., 2009; Singer, 2008; Yopyk & Prentice, 2005), the current study shows how such negative implications are facilitated through the structures of collegiate sport. For example, football players at a DI university felt the label student-athlete mis-communicated their actual experience because “football-related responsibilities counteracted their ability to take full advantage of the ‘free education’ that they are supposedly in a position to receive” (Singer, 2008, p. 406). In other words, they felt their athletic commitments hindered their academic commitments. These athletes perceived their collegiate experience as athletically oriented, which contrasts how SAs are presented to the collegiate community, society, and themselves through cultural discourses of the DSF. In

addition to the considerable hours devoted to actual athletic participation, my findings show how academic responsibilities are continually associated with athletic participation through the everyday practices of academic support. The practices of athletic academic support are all geared toward compliance. Put another way, nearly every aspect of the student-athlete daily experience centers their athletic participation. My findings along with extant literature show how the structure of collegiate sport contributes to negative associations of student-athlete identity (Adler & Adler 1985, 1987; Harrison et al., 2009; Svare, 2012). The centering of athletic participation through everyday practices further shows how student-athletes struggle to find academic validation (Jolly, 2008). Student-athletes receive minimal *dedicated* academic support and affirmation. By *dedicated*, I mean academic support provided by people who are not associated with the athletic department. Except for the brief meetings with academic advisors each term, every other aspect of academic support is facilitated through the athletic department. Even classroom participation centers athletic identity as student-athletes face stereotyping and stigma from various students and faculty (Knapp et al., 2001; Simons et al., 2007; Sharp & Sheilley, 2008.)

The majority of practices in this study, except CHAMPS/LifeSkills, could be coordinated solely through academic staff and faculty, which would center academic support on academic issues rather than issues of compliance. Additionally, engaging in these practices along with the rest of the student population, rather than through separate athletic services, would not only facilitate the integration and academic focus of student-athletes, but also empowerment and support for their academic identity. For example, we

need to focus effort on educating and empowering student-athletes to successfully negotiate advising and tutoring on their own through the main campus rather than providing separate and unnecessary services that micro-manage student-athletes to ensure they don't endanger their eligibility. The presence of these separate and special support services contributes to stereotypes and negative stigma by unnecessarily segregating student-athletes from the practices of larger student-body and implementing practices that prevent opportunities for student-athletes to take responsibility and initiative which inhibits them from acquiring the skills necessary to do so. The structure of the everyday practices serves as a continual reminder of the importance of eligibility not the importance of education.

This project further contributes to ongoing discussion in revealing the discursive interplay between how student-athlete identity is officially asserted through manual and contractual language and the structural properties facilitating student-athlete support. Specifically, discursive struggle arises as the discourses given voice through official language are silently but powerfully challenged through the structures of practice. Imagine how confusing it must be to be continually told you are a student first when your daily schedule and practice revolves around your athletic participation. Imagine how confusing it must be to hear discourses of empowerment while consistently having that autonomy questioned or taken from you. I found the study hall practice to be particularly detrimental in terms of empowerment as no other students study habits are monitored in this way. For me, it felt more like detention or punishment than a positive study environment. At the college level, good study habits are born from necessity and

personal motivation, not from someone constantly looking over your shoulder and monitoring your choices. Unfortunately, the significant investment in student-athletes prevents these important trial and error lessons from occurring naturally as they do for other students. Such lessons are imperative to the overall educational experience.

In summary, the current project supports current literature in locating a major piece of the struggle between academics and athletics within the structure of collegiate sport. My project also supports current reform efforts in the (re)envisioning of policy and practice. Drawing on social-justice driven action-oriented research, I consider the utility and efficacy of reform efforts with respect to cultural issues.

Moving research to action. As I reflect on my project, I resist thinking of commercialism and collegiate sport structure as the big bad evils that need to be slain. On the contrary, I find that attitude to be part of the problem. The big business of collegiate sport is not going anywhere anytime soon. As Svare (2004) lamented, a “cultural revolution” of that magnitude would be “comparable to tearing down the Berlin Wall and the fall of communism” (p. 28). This is not an exaggeration. To challenge commercialism in collegiate sport is to challenge capitalist ideology; which is why very little progress has been made thus far (Benford, 2007). In no way am I belittling this effort. Instead I try to be realistic rather than idealistic about what actions we take to make a difference now, while we wait on the world to change. I agree that we should continue to work toward changes in the law and public policy concerning the rights of student-athletes and engage in important public discussion about the significant implications of commercialism and capitalism within institutions of higher education (not

just in athletics). At the same time, we also need to devise ways to work within the power structure. The dominance of discourses of commercialism is already evident within the billion dollar business of collegiate sport. Findings from the current project regarding the structure of collegiate sport also identify a significant power struggle between the DSF and the DAF with the DSF prevailing in popular and cultural discourses while the DAF silently dominates through everyday practices. Reform strategies will be arguably be more productive if oriented to work with the discursive environment.

Critical action research theorist Kemmis (2008) underscored the importance of contextualized discourse and action working “in the conversations and communications” of communities of practice (p. 123). Artz (1998) adds that emancipatory efforts should speak through the language of dominant ideology. “As Gramsci (1988) argued in his characterization of wars of position and wars of movement, a direct frontal assault on dominant ideology is ill-advised and generally unsuccessful until sufficient forces have been recruited” (cited in Artz, p. 227). I think it’s safe to say we have not sufficiently recruited reinforcements for a cultural revolution just yet. Thus, based on the findings of this study, I suggest we focus localized reform efforts toward working within the discourses that constitute student-athlete identity and collegiate sport. I offer suggestions for practical application and future research in following the next section.

Theoretical Implications

This project contributes to the RDT literature in several important ways. First, the focus on structure and practice demonstrates how discursive interplay can be identified, analyzed, and observed without the presence of actual talk. Although the NCAA and

university policies and mission statements can be viewed as reported speech, discourses also arose silently through the everyday practices and processes constituting the collegiate sport system. In the present study, I found discursive struggle occurring between policy and practice. In their study of foster adoptive parents' narratives, Suter et al. (2014) identified discursive interplay as foster parent narratives challenged discourses privileged through the "mission and practice" of the foster care system (p. 74). In other words, struggle occurred between the institutional discourses invoked through the foster care system and the discourses invoked through the experience and voices of foster adoptive parents.

While Suter and colleagues indicate that discourses can arise through practice, this study adds to the literature by further examining how practice invokes discourses. For example, although tutoring is generally perceived as a supportive academic practice, the separate rules and procedures of the tutoring practice invoke discourses of athletics rather than academic support because the rules and procedures are oriented by compliance. The focus on issues such as tutor conduct and gift giving in the hiring process are explicitly associated with compliance which centers the athletic experience. The focus on tutor responsibility in upholding compliance issues undermines responsibility-taking for student-athletes. They are made aware of the rules; they should be empowered to take responsibility rather than placing that responsibility on tutors. Tutors should be focused on providing quality academic support not on getting a student-athlete in trouble by giving one a stick of gum (yes, a stick of gum could be considered an unnecessary gift). Procedures embedded in collegiate sport structure through

everyday practices silently invoke powerful discourses that center the athletic experience. Findings revealing discursive struggle between policy and practice extend knowledge on hidden polemic and indirect interplay (Baxter, 2011). Discursive struggle between policy and practice did not arise through talk but rather through the structure of everyday practices. Employing an ethnographic method can aid researchers in identifying hidden polemics that arise through practices and other unspoken moments of interaction (Clair, 2011).

Second, my findings add to the RDT literature by responding to Baxter's (2011) call to focus more on discursive interplay as it arises throughout the utterance chain. This project revealed synchronic discursive interplay through cultural and relational discourses at various sites of the utterance chain. For example, discursive interplay between the DSF and the DAF arose at the site of the distal already-spoken (existing cultural discourses) as struggle occurred simply through use of the term student-athlete, which was developed to center the DSF and marginalize the DAF. The term student-athlete was used frequently in the language of the NCAA and institutional manuals for the purpose of privileging the DSF and disqualifying the DAF in addition to its presence in everyday interactions and popular discourse. Thus, this discursive struggle is ongoing and ever present. Discursive struggle between the DAF and DSF also arose at the site of the proximal already-spoken in the relational history between the student-athlete and the institution. By signing on to participate athletically with an institution, the student-athlete acknowledged the discourses of the DSF and effectively agreed to give voice to the DSF through their conduct as a student-athlete. This agreement was not forged through

discussion but rather implied through signing. Discursive struggle arose again at the site of the proximal not-yet-spoken, in the anticipated perceptions of professors, as student-athletes were encouraged invoke the DSF and make a good impression early on in class to de-center the DAF through professional conduct, sitting up front, and actively making arrangements ahead of time for classes missed due to competition.

The third way my project extends the theory is through the ethnographic method and reflexivity. Thus far, RDT research has generally relied on reported speech and retrospective accounts, although Miller-Day (2004) used ethnographic methods in her study of communication among mothers, grandmothers, and adult daughters. Miller-Day's research was oriented by earlier versions of RDT prior to RDT 2.0 (Baxter, 2011). The current project illustrates RDT's potential in the field where researchers can observe and analyze discourses as they arise through talk and practice rather than retrospective accounts. Ethnography also invites theoretical and methodological hybridity by bringing the ethnographer more fully into the research process and encouraging more discussion of researcher subjectivity and reflexive accounts of the research process. This project answers Foster's (2008) call for more reflexivity in interpersonal research and adds to the small but hopefully growing body of critical interpersonal (or critical relational) work. Bringing critical perspectives into interpersonal research additionally answers calls for theoretical and methodological hybridity (Baxter, 2012) and giving marginalized discourses voice through research (Baxter, 2011). Although previous RDT research has acknowledged the researcher(s) as an important factor in the research and analysis process, the scholars chose not to use personal voice or share their reflexive experience of

the process (Baxter et al. 2012; Stephenson-Abetz, 2012). This project expands on current critical interpersonal RDT research by demonstrating the possibilities offered by introducing other critical voices and methods. While I did work to acknowledge my positionality and be reflexive throughout the project, there is still much work to be done on bridging how critical is conceptualized in interpersonal studies (Baxter, 2011; Wood 1993, 2009) and how critical is conceptualized in critical cultural studies (Calafell, 2013; Conquergood, 1995; Madison, 2006).

The fifth way this study adds to the RDT literature is through attention to discursive power (Baxter, 2011; Deetz, 2001). This project increases understanding of the fluidity of power through discursive positioning. The DSF has maintained power in popular and public discourse for a long time in spite of continual challenge. However, a recent event may be signaling a change in discursive tide. On March 26, 2014, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) in Chicago issued a ruling that the Northwestern University football players qualified as employees (Ganin, 2014). For the first time in history, student-athletes have legally achieved recognition as employees and can rightfully unionize and collectively bargain. Of course, Northwestern University plans to appeal and the NCAA has acknowledged their disappointment as both institutions stand by their student-first discourse. But for now, the discourse of athlete first is enjoying the spotlight in popular discussion as the ruling has publicly and legally acknowledged that these young men, in spite of not receiving the revenue they generate, are indeed professionals and have the right to organize on their behalf and in their best interest. The case was largely won by demonstrating the power of the DAF in everyday practices

through special rules, significant time commitment, the athletic focus of the academic scholarship (NLRB, 2014). NLRB regional director Peter Sung Ohr asserted “it cannot be said that they [grant-in-aid scholarship players] are ‘primarily students’ who ‘spend only a limited number of hours performing their athletic duties’” (p. 18). He further stated:

The fact that the players undoubtedly learn great life lessons from participating on the football team and take with them important values such as character, dedication, perseverance, and team work, is insufficient to show that their relationship with the [institution] Employer is primarily and academic one. (p.19)

This ruling brings the power of the DAF to the center and delivers a strong and significant challenge to the authoritative power of the DSF.

Finally, my project adds to current literature by considering how RDT can be applied through practical application. As the discursive interplay discussed through this project largely reflected polemic struggle in which cultural discourses take on discursive battle positions, I consider how the discursive struggles constituting student-athlete identity can be purposefully positioned in transformative struggle with an eye toward re-envisioning practice and reform.

Starting a critical-interpersonal conversation. Given my orientation toward bridging critical and interpersonal research, I am very interested in provoking further discussion with scholars who locate themselves or their scholarship as critical interpersonal. At present, I am unable to find dedicated discussion regarding various articulations of *critical interpersonal* scholarship as well as if and how scholars are conceptualizing their work as *critical* and *interpersonal*. There are leading interpersonal

scholars who incorporate critical perspectives such as Leslie Baxter (2011, 2012) and Julia Wood (1993, 1995, 2004). Bryant Alexander is a critical and performance scholar with a background in interpersonal communication. Sandra Faulkner (2012, 2013a, 2013b) focuses on critical identity issues in interpersonal relationships. Although each of these scholars works within and around the intersection of critical interpersonal scholarship, I am unable to determine how they perceive themselves and their scholarship in relation to critical and interpersonal perspectives. I would be very interested in interviewing these scholars about their work to determine how they each define *critical* and *interpersonal* work as well as whether or not they consider their work to be *critical interpersonal*. I believe this would be an excellent place to start a focused conversation about critical interpersonal scholarship.

Practical Applications

A major impetus of this project and the focus of RQ3 was to theorize how the multiple and interconnected discursive struggles that constitute student-athlete identity can inform the practices of community members. My findings led me to specific suggestions for student-athlete support services, faculty, and researchers. In this section I seek to extend RDT by specifically orienting it toward practical application based on my findings. Given that the dialectics constituting student-athlete identity are predominately antagonistic and polemic, which has thus far led to an ongoing war in collegiate sport, I find it useful to offer my suggestions by intentionally re-positioning the discursive struggles as *transformative*:

In this idealized discursive moment of dialogue, discourses lose their zero-sum relation of opposition and become open to the possibility of new emergent

meanings. In dialogism theory, discursive transformation is evaluated as superior to all forms of polemic enactment, because it realizes the dialogic potentiality for creativity—emergent new meanings. (Baxter, 2011, p. 139)

At this moment, although I am alone at my computer, I write with the intention to create dialogue with readers as well as practitioners through my suggestions. What I am ultimately suggesting is that we provoke future discussions of collegiate sports with respect to the presence of multiple and competing discourses and actively resist the polemic struggle by acknowledging both/and truths about student-athletes and collegiate sport. The power of the DAF and the centering of the athletic experience are present in the findings of my project, current literature, and now an important legal ruling.

However, the NCAA and institutions continue to stand by the student first discourse and denounce the overwhelming presence of athletic participation to the detriment of student-athletes and their educational experience. Based on the powerful presence of both the DSF and the DAF, I suggest that reform efforts strategically position the DSF and DAF in conversation, rather than confrontation, to work toward the possibility of creating an *aesthetic moment* of dialogic creativity (Baxter, 2011). An aesthetic moment involves “the interpenetration of discourses in such a way that each meaning system is profoundly reconstructed” (p. 139).

First, I suggest community members come together to advocate for all student-athletes to engage in a quality academic experience. Even if not at the policy level (yet), it is important to acknowledge that although we want collegiate sports to embody its cornerstones of integrity and amateurism, those ideals have arguably been contested for one hundred years. Additionally, the current and ongoing incidence of impropriety and

scandal along with the fact that it is a multi-million dollar business (no matter who is collecting the checks) render these terms meaningless in light of what they are meant to portray. According to the NCAA, the definition of amateurism, beyond the educational focus, includes “student-athletes should be protected from exploitation by professional and commercial enterprises” (NCAA 2.9, Appendix B). Scholars are arguing that student-athletes, especially those whom are African-American, are indeed being exploited by both professional and commercial enterprises through collegiate sport (Branch, 2011; Hawkins, 2013; Van Rheenen, 2012). We also acknowledge that in spite of 100 years of arguing that commercialism is the culprit of most all that is despised in collegiate sport, it’s not going anywhere anytime soon. The big business of collegiate sport will continue, in spite of reform efforts to stop it.

Second, we acknowledge that although we want student-athletes to be educationally centered and driven, this is most often not the case for two different reasons. First, just as some non-athletes choose to enter college as a means to an end (i.e., graduation equals trust fund or employment guarantee), so do some student-athletes view their college experience as a stepping stone to a professional career. In spite of excellent program design (which is currently not a reality), we accept that there will always be student-athletes and others who are not academically driven. To imply that all non-athletes are automatically academically driven is to be incredibly naïve. As educators, we accept this challenge and strive to ever discover new ways to meet students where they are and encourage them to engage and appreciate their educational experience on terms they deem viable. We also acknowledge that even when student-athletes enter

the collegiate environment with strong academic goals, the enormous athletic responsibility and commitment they shoulder greatly hinders this process, especially but not solely for those athletes who are academically unprepared and participate in high revenue sports. We admit that for many years, coaches and administrators have knowingly recruited student-athletes who are woefully unprepared for the rigors of higher education. We recognize that this practice will most likely continue, as many exceptional athletes come from communities with dismal academic resources and support. Rather than continuing to ignore and silence this practice and place these individuals in academic situations that only lead to further stigma and denigration while we look the other way and cheer them on the court, we accept that (for now) this practice is part of the system and begin to actively implement academic support throughout the process. For example, addressing this issue, learning specialist Mary Willingham (2013) reminded us that the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill once

established a developmental program called the Academy at Carolina in 1795 that lasted for two decades. Sometimes referred to as the prep academy or the grammar school, teachers helped the young men from our state right here on this campus to get prepared first for coursework. Imagine that –transparency. (pp. 2-3)

In other words, instead of punishing these individuals for their lack of education while we reap the benefits of their athletic talents, we implement programs to close the educational gap so that many young people who would be denied college education because of socioeconomic constraints can take advantage of this opportunity (Van Rheenen, 2012). In doing so, we also acknowledge the broken state of our educational system when we spend more energy and money helping student-athletes lie and cheat to remain eligible

rather than ensuring that every single child in the country has equal access to quality education.

In acknowledging the hard truths of the competing discourses that constitute our understanding of student-athletes and the structure of collegiate sports, we can actively seek to bring them together in a collective effort to transform the structure and system from the inside.

Recommendations to athletic departments and student-athlete support. By giving equal voice to the many discourses that constitute student-athlete identity we can begin to envision support in transformative ways. Based on my findings that current athletic academic support practices do not effectively center the educational experience, I fully support the push to return advising, tutoring, and study hall to the sole control of academic departments and programs. Student-athletes already meet regularly with their academic advisors; athletic advising should be dissolved to encourage further engagement and relational development with their academic departments and advisors and avoid problems arising from bouncing between academic and athletic advisors. I also believe some practices should be re-conceptualized and remain in the athletic department. Relieving SAS staff of academic duties provides more time to develop more programming and services to help SAs adjust to the realities of their athletic participation and strive for balance in a very unbalanced culture. In their conceptual model of academic success for student-athletes, Comeaux and Harrison (2011) highlighted the Scholar-Baller (SB) program “in response to glaring concerns about the lack of

responsive intervention strategies to improve student-athlete academic success and social integration in the college setting” (p. 236). Further

The SB curriculum in particular was designed for academic support services, and as such, it considers the experiences, values, and cultural orientations of student-athletes in order to foster more positive learning environments and desirable outcomes. . . . in many ways, SB not only serves as counter pedagogy to traditional ways of thinking and knowing but also appropriately offers possibilities for academic and critical literacy development among increasingly diverse student-athlete populations. (p. 237)

Thus, such a program acknowledges the intensive training and socialization student-athletes experience prior to earning a DI scholarship and draws on that experience as well as popular culture, music, and media to assist student-athletes in critically examining their multiple identities and working to negotiate them in healthy ways. The SB program effectively addresses identity concerns in addition to fostering academic skills by drawing on the knowledge and experience student-athletes bring with them rather than focusing on their lack of academic preparedness.

The SB program provides a shining example in how CHAMPS/LifeSkills could be re-envisioned with respect to the dominance of the DAF and the de-centering of the DAF in the everyday experience. With general academic support out of the hands of SAS staff, they can focus more concentrated attention to assisting student-athletes in understanding how athletic versus academic expectations/identities have influenced their life experience. Those student-athletes who feel balanced and academically prepared can help provide support for those who are struggling. Athletics counselors can also work together with faculty to draw on athletic experience to help struggling student-athletes translate knowledge on the field to knowledge in the classroom. Such programs should

work to validate academic viability through athletic experience, rather than positioning academics as a means to athletic experience. As a part of the SB program faculty and athletics staff can also work together to create preparatory classes for incoming athletes, as suggested above by Mary Willingham, which draw on the sport experience to build academic skills. For example, football and basketball players have years of analytical experience through their sport participation. The ability to memorize plays, read offensive and defensive plays and alterations and adjust to ever-changing strategies and situations points to considerable academic aptitude along with years of discipline and focused work ethic point to considerable academic aptitude. Such sport-oriented analytic skills can be translated into academic analytic skills by thorough popular and academic sport literature. I don't believe we have even begun to realize the potential of actively working to transform sport acquired skills and knowledge to skill and success in the classroom.

I strongly believe that SAS staff would embrace the changes I have suggested above; however, they are not the decision makers when it comes to the structures of practice. These changes would have to be approved by the athletic director and with the support of the coaching staff. Given the importance of winning and generating revenue, I believe departments may be reluctant to let go of the control they have through the current practices. Given the potential costs the athletic department and teams might incur as a result of actually empowering and supporting student-athletes to take responsibility for their academic engagement and athletic participation, I anticipate significant resistance. However, I do believe that given the proper education and responsibility, student-athletes would flourish under this freedom. We just haven't yet given them that

chance. While we work to convince athletic departments that this move is in ultimately in everybody's best interest, support staff can use the findings of this study to change the ways in which they currently offer academic support. Staff may not be able to cut out but could feasibly cut down the amount of monitoring that occurs throughout advising, tutoring, and study hall. They can also be conscious of the conflicting messages and work to minimize or and address how such messages impact the everyday lives of student-athletes and their academic experience. In order for this to work, we really need coaches to support the effort.

Issues of race and socioeconomics in collegiate sport. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge that many student-athletes are able to successfully negotiate their academic and athletic commitments and graduate within the traditional four to five year window. The NCAA and institutions point to these student-athletes to effectively say "Look, it can and is being done. Our position is supported." However, there remains a consistent group of student-athletes that are unable to successfully negotiate the challenges. There is scant research considering the many factors (i.e., socioeconomics, educational preparation, family background, race, gender, sport) that contribute to the academic success of student-athletes. Studies considering the multitude of relevant factors show "scholarship athletes, compared to non-scholarship or partial scholarship athletes, were the least prepared for the academic rigors of college and were least successful in college as measured by GPA and graduation rate" (Purdy et al., p. 444, 1982). Comeaux and Harrison (2011) emphasized the importance of family background, educational experiences and preparation, and individual attributes as factors contributing

to student-athlete academic success. Their research pointed to race, ethnicity, gender, and level of competition as significant influences connecting to family education and socioeconomic status and access to quality primary and secondary education. Research supports that high revenue athletes, particularly in football and basketball, face the greatest academic struggle (Branch, 2011; Singer, 2008). Van Rhee (2012) asserted, “any discussion of athletic exploitation in the US must acknowledge race as an important and confounding variable” (p. 11). Studies also show that African-American athletes are socialized to believe that going pro in sports represents their best hope for success and that the collegiate environment supports this notion (Beamon & Bell, 2002, 2006).

Although my study does not directly address issues of race and socioeconomics, my findings regarding structure and identity have important implications given the literature. Specifically, my findings indicate that collegiate sport structure is the most detrimental for student-athletes who are over-identified with their athletic identity and are not academically prepared. Mary Willingham draws our attention to the underlying racial implications

. . . 2 sports pay for the other 26 sports. I ask you to stop and think about the diversity of the two teams vs. 26 teams? Do you see underprivileged and privileged? I see oppressed and privileged. Race is the whale swimming just below the surface. (p. 2)

She is referring to the fact that student-athletes of the big money football and basketball teams generate the revenue that runs the entire athletic department. These are the primarily African-American athletes who are brought to college sports unprepared for the academic challenges, let alone negotiating those challenges along with immense athletic commitments (Purdy et al, 1982; Van Rhee 2011, 2012). Beamon and Bell (2002,

2006) additionally argue that these individuals have been strongly socialized to see themselves as athletes and view professional sports as their only option. As educators and sport administrators, we have a responsibility to address the detrimental issues of power and inequality in the collegiate sport system and cultivate the academic potential of these athletes who are currently falling through the cracks.

Recommendations to faculty. Reformers such as The Drake Group and the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics have argued that faculty represent an integral part of the reform process while we wait for changes at the policy level. Scholars have underscored the importance of increased interaction between faculty and student-athletes (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011). Such interaction can assist in decreasing student-athletes' perceptions of faculty discrimination as well as increase faculty understanding of the experiences and challenges that student-athletes face (Jolly, 2008). In addition to further educating and empowering faculty to be more involved with student-athletes and athletics, I am also proposing specific curricular development.

Based on graduation statistics and academic information provided by the NCAA as well as current research, we know that many student-athletes enter college academically prepared and committed to specific educational goals. We also know that there are student-athletes that enter college with academic goals who are not sufficiently prepared. And further there are student-athletes who enter college with neither the academic preparation nor interest (Adler & Adler, 1991; NCAA, 2014; Purdy et al., 1982.). Lack of academic preparation and interest has been attributed to the focused athletic socialization, lack of academic validation, and socioeconomic constraints of

particular athletes (Beamon & Bell, 2002; Van Rheenen, 2012). Unprepared and uninterested student-athletes are often pushed into unchallenging or fake courses (i.e., independent study course that have no assignments or curriculum) and meaningless degrees (Duderstadt, 2000; Purdy et al., 1982). I propose this particular issue be addressed through developing purposeful and academically challenging sport-focused curriculum for a wide range of professional sport interests as a professional athlete track. To my knowledge, there are no existing academic programs to support athletes who want to turn professional.

Although they may be a small population, there are a significant number of student-athletes who enter college with the goal of turning professional. Depending on their sport and potential injury, some of these student-athletes will complete four or five years of school. Others will leave after one, two, or three years. Rather than placing these individuals in random classes that will never lead to a degree, I propose the develop curriculum to support their professional aspirations academically. Such courses could lead to degree completion at a later date but at the very least, would encourage academic engagement during the time school is attended.

Sample courses from a one year curriculum include: NCAA Compliance; Communication, Culture, & Sport; Sport Economics; History of Labor Relations in Sport; Critical Identity Issues in Sport; Sports Media & Public Relations; Introduction to Contracts & Legal Issues in Sport; Communicating Injury & Rehabilitation in Sport; Everyday Relationships in Sport. Such classes are not only appropriate for professional athletes but a variety of budding sport professionals. These classes can fit into core

writing and research classes and could be taught by various departments such as sociology, business, psychology, criminal justice, ethnic studies, and communication, to represent a variety of perspectives. I could also envision this particular degree offered primarily through communication departments with interdisciplinary support. The objective here is to create meaningful curriculum that will not only attract aspiring professional athletes but academically prepare them for the significant challenges facing their entrance into the culture of professional sport. Additionally this curriculum will also attract and prepare a variety of sport professionals and does not solely benefit student-athletes. During my graduate teaching experience, I was honored with the opportunity to teach a special topics course that I developed on *Communication, Culture, & Sport*. The majority of my students were student-athletes, largely due to the time of the class and priority registration. The registration alone speaks to the topical attraction of the course to student-athletes. I also had the opportunity to watch some student-athletes who struggled in their other classes, which I knew from my SAS position, engage the course material and regularly participate in class discussion. I strongly believe in the potential of this curricular development. The NCAA Compliance course could strategically be offered as a summer class (in addition to fall or spring terms) to educate incoming student-athletes on the important compliance regulations they will need to know to effectively engage advising, tutoring, and textbooks on their own. This class need not be geared specifically toward student-athletes as this information is equally important for students seeking professional employment within collegiate athletics.

Developing dedicated sport curriculum that speaks broadly to budding sport professionals as well as offering a distinct curriculum for professional athletes is a project that is very close to my heart. It represents the driving force behind my graduate education. I would have liked to include a more detailed curricular plan for this project but it was beyond the scope. As I work to develop such a curriculum I would like to research the major sport related programs currently available to better orient my process. The majority of what is available now focuses on sports media, business aspects of sport, and clinical sport professions. I envision curricular development to address a broad range of issues in sport for a variety of professions that included much needed education regarding issues of gender, race, sexuality, socioeconomics, legal issues, labor practices and players associations, non-clinical perspectives of injury and rehabilitation, communication and relationships among coaches, fans, and players, to name a few. I specifically want to develop a professional athlete curriculum that has one, two, three, and four year tracks that are strategically designed for number of years attended with the potential to eventually lead to a four year degree.

Recommendations for sports researchers. The delicate material environment of the athletic department leads to specific implications for those hoping to conduct research within collegiate sports. The need for further ethnographic and community based research is evident. Singer (2008) called specifically for action research to assist student-athletes in not only having a voice but an opportunity to create change within their own environment. I agree that action-research holds ample opportunity for athletic departments and student-athletes. However, it is very important that researchers wanting

to get involved uphold the tenets of participation and transparency. Such projects should be largely driven by community members so as not to jeopardize the material lives of those involved.

I also want to share some of my ethnographic experience and discourses that constituted my academic/staff member identity. Clair (2011) explained that efforts to understand culture through reflexivity and performance “includes attention to the dialectical unfolding of meaning, the tensions in which people live, and the dialogical aspects [or rather] expressiveness of the members of the culture” including the researcher (pp. 124-25). In this case, I feel it important to identify the dialectic of *academic commitment- community commitment* that animated my identity and fieldwork experience. How my body and intentions are read within the space is relevant to the research whether or not it is specifically related to the research questions. Reflexivity necessitates my ability to look at how I am approaching my fieldwork and analysis; to critically turn back on myself and consider how my values, biases, and beliefs are always and already at work in my observations and analysis (Goodall, 2000, p. 139). This dialectic was ever-present in my daily experience and pertinent to those engaging in community-based work. As I discussed in chapter four in regard to the background check issue during my hiring process, I struggled to balance my academic and community commitments and increasingly found the two to be virtually incompatible in my particular situation. I felt pressure from both sides to focus on my priorities, but I struggled to make those choices. This project was supposed to be an expression of my meta-theoretical commitments but I often felt I had to make a choice between my

research values and my need to complete the project so I could graduate. This tension influenced my role within the space and how my academic-community identity was constituted through my words and actions.

In regard to conducting research with athletic departments I think it is imperative to address and consider the academic intentions that motivate the fieldwork as well as the academic commitments that will influence the fieldwork and potentially pull focus from community commitment. Ultimately I am satisfied with the time and effort I invested in SAS and the community. In spite of my heavy academic commitments I did dedicate a great deal of time effort, and energy to my internship, to the people I encountered, and to reflexively considering my positionality within the space. I wasn't perfect and I did make mistakes but I did not treat the internship as a means to my personal ends. However, I must be mindful that most of the mistakes I made came from prioritizing academic commitments. In the future, I would not conduct this type of research in connection with an academic time table. In other words, I would not do community work as a part of my dissertation research or a final push toward tenure or as part of a time-oriented grant. The academic stakes are too high and will ultimately outweigh investment in the community. Community engagement should be oriented by community time, demonstrate a clear commitment to community members, and consider the materiality of the space with respect to the research (Crabtree, 1988; Macau, 1996; Pollock et al.,1996.)

Conclusion

Student-athlete identity and collegiate sport culture represent complex issues that have reverberations across college campuses and throughout mainstream society. At the base of the issues are young people who are in many ways leaders and role models in local and larger communities. There are many beliefs and ideas contributing to our understandings of whom and what student-athletes should represent. In order to provide quality support for these individuals we need to acknowledge all of the discourses that speak to their identity rather than privileging some and dismissing others. Perhaps it is true that many student-athletes are academically driven and enter college with the tools and education necessary to succeed in such a challenging environment. Whether or not student-athletes enter college academically prepared, my findings demonstrate that the collegiate sport structure will largely deter rather than support efforts to engage education and balance academic and athletic commitments. But, what about the student-athletes who are not prepared; should we overlook their experiences because they represent the minority of the overall population? My findings revealing the centering of the athletic experience and linking structure and identity have particularly detrimental implications for student-athletes entering college unprepared and over-identified with their athletic identity. Rather than elevate the academic experience, the structure of support prioritizes compliance which ultimately positions academics as a means to athletic ends, albeit unintentionally.

This project has murky and important implications for the student-athletes who are most often dismissed or over-looked as elite or high profile. Sports Illustrated

commentator Seth Davis (2011) wrote, “We spend way too much energy worrying about how the system affects a very small number of elite athletes, young men who are going to be multimillionaires as soon as they leave campus” (p. 4). But the truth is most of these young men won’t go on to become millionaires (Yost, 2009). And for the few who do, bankruptcy and financial ruin often await as a result of being grossly unprepared and financially uneducated to manage celebrity wealth and status at the age of 20 (Corben, 2012). In short, the NCAA system of college sports is broken. It is financially and academically

corrupt and morally bankrupt. This system drives more than “college ball.” It affects our economy, our youth, and our society at large. Worst of all, it earns profits off the free labor of kids, many of whom don’t know how to read, write, or do basic math. Not only will they never graduate from college, 97 percent of them will never sign a professional sports contract. (Yost, 2009, p. 195)

My findings pointing to the lack of dedicated academic support and legitimacy, the centering of athletic participation through everyday practices, and the power of the student first discourse indicate that the student-athletes who need the academic scholarship and support the most will have the greatest difficulty. Additionally, those students will most likely not have a meaningful educational experience or graduate.

I designed this study to gain a deeper understanding of student-athlete identity and collegiate sport structure. My findings support current literature and conversations indicating that student-athletes and their everyday experience, within and outside of the classroom, are oriented by and through their athletic identity and participation. In short, their experience is largely devoid of solid academic support and validation of their academic identity. Luckily many student-athletes enter college with sufficient academic

preparation and strong family and economic support to help them negotiate the complex environment. Unfortunately there are also others who lack academic preparation as well as family and economic support. These are the athletes who are most negatively affected by the structure of collegiate sport. They are the athletes who are effectively paying the bills for everybody else while struggling to receive an education and support for the academic promises made. Collegiate sport structure currently has “an unmistakable whiff of the plantation” as the athletic talent of socioeconomically disadvantaged young people is exploited for great financial reward while the top-notch education they are promised is largely prevented by their immense athletic commitments (Branch, 2011, p. 5). And the hard truth is that every person involved in collegiate sport, whether players, coaches, administrators, staff, sponsors, NCAA, or fans are *all* implicated in this plantation mentality because we have watched it happen for one hundred years and we are still watching.

The situation is appalling, but there is hope. And we don’t have to wait for policy change or the fall of capitalism. We can make significant strides with a few key changes that will benefit all student-athletes and especially those who are truly being exploited by the current structure. We can place academic support fully in the hands of academic departments and re-structure athletic support to focus more on the complexity of the discursive environment and how to work within it. We can develop curriculum to translate athletic talents into classroom skills and support the student-athletes who plan to go professional. We can educate and empower student-athletes through curriculum to take responsibility for their athletic ambitions through academic engagement. We can

have faith in their ability to succeed and support it through our actions. We have promised these individuals a quality education in exchange for their athletic participation. Clearly they are holding up their end of the deal. The billions keep rolling in as people around the world are mesmerized by the rare talents and excitement that characterize the unique entertainment of collegiate sport; young people with superior skill, on the verge of greatness with their whole lives a head of them. We marvel at their accomplishments. But we are not holding up our end of the deal—our promise that their education is our top priority—until we can say, without a doubt, that every single student-athlete has been provided the same academic opportunities as their fellow students. And that we have made every effort possible to further assist those student-athletes that we know aren't academically prepared but whose athletic potential is unrivaled and coveted by universities. Making the necessary changes in academic support and curriculum will not only benefit student-athletes, but campus communities, and society. The ball is in our court.

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APPENDIX A

Student-Athlete Support Manual & Website⁸

Mission Statement

Student Athlete Support is committed to empowering student-athletes to take charge of their education and life by providing the tools and resources necessary to prepare for life roles. We encourage student-athletes to capitalize upon collegiate and athletic experiences as they become holistic persons.

Philosophy

The Department of Athletics at the University⁹ recognizes that participation in Division I intercollegiate athletics makes exceptional demands on a student-athlete's time and energy. To ensure each student-athlete develops to his/her potential the Department of Athletics is committed to a comprehensive and systematic personal development program designed to reach each student-athlete based on his or her individual needs. The focus of the program is on the individual as a whole person-academically, athletically, socially, and emotionally-and the changing needs and skills of that individual in the years during college and after graduation.

Also considered in the development of this program is the belief that student-athletes at the University should be integrated into the University community as much as possible. The Student-Athlete Support Program integrates existing University services and resources, and where appropriate, creates new initiatives to enhance the student-athlete experience in the areas of academic commitment, personal development, and community service.

Services

The Student-Athlete Support program has the individual academic needs of our student-athletes as its primary focus. Through academic enrichment we address the academic issues that face our student-athletes with a developmental, holistic framework in providing services and support. Our philosophy is to empower our student-athletes to take the necessary steps to be successful both in and out of the classroom. The following is a sample of what the Office of Student-Athlete Support provides as we assist student-athletes in reaching their academic goals.

⁸ The following statements are taken from the institutional student-athlete manual and corresponding student-athlete support website. I have not included the URL or manual name to protect confidentiality.

⁹ Names have been removed to protect confidentiality

Academic Services

About us. Student-athletes are first and foremost students who are highly committed to both their academic and athletic lives. Balancing those areas can be both challenging and exciting. Student-Athlete Support provides academic services designed to help create that balance. We offer a variety of services including a study hall program, free tutorial services for all student-athletes, and academic counseling as a supplement to the faculty advising offered on campus. Our student-athletes have proven their ability to balance demands in the classroom and in the athletic arena.

Academic advising. Our student-athletes follow the university academic advising procedures used by the student body. In addition, Student-Athlete Support staff work along with the office of the Registrar, to assist student-athletes by monitoring student-athletes' degree progress and eligibility status according to University and NCAA requirements. The staff also works with campus advisers to assist student-athletes with course selection appropriate to the student-athlete's practice and competition schedules. All student-athletes are ultimately responsible for completing the requirements that will lead to a degree and are required to meet with their major advisors each quarter to ensure these requirements are being met.

Referrals to campus resources. Student-Athlete Support works with a wide array of offices on campus. Because of the frequent interaction of student-athletes with SAS, staff will refer a student-athlete to the appropriate campus resources when appropriate. Resources include, but are not limited to, Disability Services, Counseling Center, sport psychology, Career Center, Learning Effectiveness, and other support services.

Class absence letters. Student-athletes are responsible for informing their instructors of any class days to be missed due to athletics events in which they are participating. Student-athletes will be provided with a schedule of travel dates that coincide with class dates and absence policy to present to instructors. This must be signed by the instructor and returned to the assigned athletics adviser. In the event that you reach post-season play, letters will be sent to instructors informing them of additional missed class dates. It is the responsibility of the student-athlete to make arrangements with instructors regarding any missed lectures, assignments, and/or exams.

Transition programs. Transition programs incorporate NCAA's CHAMPS Life Skills programming to assist student-athletes in becoming well-rounded individuals. Starting with First Year Transition (FYT), this program is designed to prepare incoming freshmen and transfer student-athletes for the challenges and rewards of student life at the University. The seminars are implemented with the goal of assisting student-athletes in transitioning to collegiate life and attaining success throughout their career. They will

learn about their values, motivation, and conceptualizations of their surroundings. Guest speakers from the University faculty, athletics staff, and community will address personal development concerns, such as time management, leadership, and self-esteem. These seminars are held throughout a student-athlete's first year.

Student-athlete support planning meetings. Each year student-athletes should schedule a planning meeting with their athletics counselor. At this meeting, a degree plan is developed for new students or evaluated for returning students with consideration of NCAA degree progress requirements. Any decisions regarding choice of major are also discussed. Progress toward fulfillment of the University and major requirements, as well as normal progress toward graduation and preliminary graduation checks are addressed in this meeting.

Early registration. Early registration is provided to student-athletes to assist in balancing academic and athletic commitments. It is intended to help student-athletes schedule classes around practices and minimize class absences due to excused athletic team travel. It is the responsibility of student-athletes to be aware of early registration dates and to take advantage of the opportunity.

Study hall. The number of hours required for study tables is determined by each individual coach. All study table hours must be completed by Friday at 4:00 pm. If you are gone due to competition, you are responsible for completing your hours prior to leaving. Official hours recorded by SAS will be reported to coaches on a weekly basis, however you are responsible for keeping track of your hours as well.

Options for completing study table hours. You may choose when and how to complete your hours, **unless you are assigned specific times or options by your coach or the SAS staff.**

Supervised Study Tables

Day: Monday-Thursday 8-5 p.m., Friday 8-4 p.m.

Evening: Sundays-Wednesdays 6-10 p.m.

Location: Library, Staff Floor

Study Hall Rules

- No cell phones, meals, or tobacco during day or evening hours.
- Only study materials should be present. Bring enough work for the entire time you plan to stay or you will be asked to leave.
- Laptops may only be used for school-related work. No movies (unless required for class), instant messaging, or facebook/myspace.
- Headphones may be used, but must be turned down so that others are not disturbed.

- Be quiet and show respect for those around you. If you are caught using your cell phone (talking or texting) or creating any other disruptions, you will be asked to leave without warning. You will be required to speak with your coach before returning, and you will forfeit any hours earned in that session.
- A maximum of 3 hours may be earned **each** day.
- You must sign in for a minimum of 30 minutes or your hours will not be counted.

Group Projects/Meetings: All work with a group must be completed during assigned hours and locations or it will not be counted.

Tutoring. Students can request tutors through SAS. You must submit tutoring hours each week through the online supplemental form at the bottom of this page.

Professors, si instructors, and graduate assistants. Students can meet with professors, supplemental instruction leaders, graduate assistants and instructors in the writing center for assistance with academic work. All hours must be submitted through the supplemental form or emails from the professor, TA/GA, or writing center. Written notes will no longer be accepted!

Additional academic work. Includes **Plays, Speakers, or Outside Lectures**
Required for Class: Provide proof of attendance. A maximum of 2 hours per week can be earned for these events. You must submit hours through the online supplemental form. A ticket/or program will be required to receive time.

CHAMPS/Life Skills. Receive one hour for each event sponsored by SAS. Attendance will be taken and reported each week.

CHAMPS/Life Skills. The mission of the NCAA is to maintain intercollegiate athletics as an integral part of the campus educational program and the student-athlete as an integral part of the student body. With this in mind, the CHAMPS/Life Skills (Challenging Athletes' Minds for Personal Success) Program was created to support the student-athlete development initiatives of NCAA member institutions and to enhance the quality of the student-athlete experience within the context of higher education.

In the process of achieving this mission, the CHAMPS/Life Skills Program will:

- Promote student-athletes' ownership of their academic, athletic, career, personal and community responsibilities.
- Meet the changing needs of student-athletes.
- Promote respect for diversity and inclusion among student-athletes.
- Assist student-athletes in identifying and applying transferable skills.
- Enhance partnerships between the NCAA, member institutions and their communities for the purpose of education.

- Foster an environment that encourages student-athletes to effectively access campus resources.
- Encourage the development of character, integrity and leadership skills.

CHAMPS/Life Skills Program Commitment Statements

Commitment to Academic Excellence

To support the academic progress of the student-athlete toward intellectual development and graduation.

Commitment to Athletic Excellence

To build philosophical foundations for the development of athletic programs that are broad-based, equitable and dedicated to the well-being of the student-athlete.

Commitment to Personal Development

To support the development of a well-balanced lifestyle for student-athletes, encouraging emotional well-being, leadership, personal growth and decision-making skills.

Commitment to Career Development

To encourage the student-athlete to develop and pursue career and life goals.

Commitment to Service

To engage the student-athlete in service to his or her campus and surrounding communities.

Information taken from NCAA CHAPMS/LifeSkills Home

Tutoring. Free tutorial services are available to all student-athletes. Tutoring is meant to assist student-athletes in their gaining and understanding of course material. Tutors are not intended to teach course material. Student-athletes should come prepared to tutorial sessions and have all necessary course materials, such as books, notes, and course packets.

How to Obtain a Tutor. Fill out the online tutor request form at least one week prior to needing a tutor. Student-athletes will receive a response within 24-48 hours acknowledging the request. A follow-up email will be sent when a tutor has been found with their contact information. It is the student-athletes' responsibility to contact the tutor and setup the session(s). If no tutor is available, the tutorial coordinator will contact campus resources to identify potential tutors. The student should seek assistance from his or her professor, TA, other classmates, or campus resources provided to identify alternative assistance, such as office hours or work with a graduate assistant.

- Tutoring sessions must take place in public places on-campus. Each session is expected to begin on time.
- If a conflict arises and the student-athlete is unable to make his or her appointment, the student must contact the tutor. If the tutor cannot be reached, the student must contact the tutorial coordinator. For any non-emergency situation, student-athletes must contact the tutor at least 24-hours prior to the scheduled time.

- Failure to attend a scheduled appointment without 24-hour notice to the tutor will result in a warning. Upon report of a second no-show, the student-athlete will lose tutoring privileges for the remainder of the quarter.

2011-12 Faculty Athletic Program

The University Division of Athletics is proud to continue the program for the 2011-12 academic year.

Mission statement. The program is intended to facilitate interaction between University academic leaders and the coaches and student-athletes of the varsity athletic teams. By partnering selected faculty members with each team, student-athletes and coaches will be provided with valuable additional resources while professors will have the unique opportunity to experience the excitement of Division I athletics firsthand.

About. Modeled off of Princeton University's highly successful "Faculty Fellows" program, the program is an academic-oriented initiative designed to further integrate the University's athletic and academic programs. The program endeavor will provide benefits to faculty, coaches, and student-athletes. Professors will have unique opportunities to interact with and support varsity athletic programs, and further enhance the student-athletes' academic achievements.

APPENDIX B

NCAA Division I Manual 2013-2014¹⁰

2.2 The Principle of Student-Athlete Well-Being [*]

Intercollegiate athletics programs shall be conducted in a manner designed to protect and enhance the physical and educational well-being of student-athletes. (*Revised: 11/21/05*)

2.2.1 Overall Educational Experience [*]

It is the responsibility of each member institution to establish and maintain an environment in which a student-athlete's activities are conducted as an integral part of the student-athlete's educational experience. (*Adopted: 1/10/95*)

2.2.2 Cultural Diversity and Gender Equity [*]

It is the responsibility of each member institution to establish and maintain an environment that values cultural diversity and gender equity among its student-athletes and intercollegiate athletics department staff. (*Adopted: 1/10/95*)

2.2.4 Student-Athlete/Coach Relationship [*]

It is the responsibility of each member institution to establish and maintain an environment that fosters a positive relationship between the student-athlete and coach. (*Adopted: 1/10/95*)

2.9 The Principle of Amateurism [*]

Student-athletes shall be amateurs in an intercollegiate sport, and their participation should be motivated primarily by education and by the physical, mental and social benefits to be derived. Student participation in intercollegiate athletics is an avocation, and student-athletes should be protected from exploitation by professional and commercial enterprises.

2.13 The Principle Governing Financial Aid [*]

A student-athlete may receive athletically related financial aid administered by the institution without violating the principle of amateurism, provided the amount does not exceed the cost of education authorized by the Association; however, such aid as defined

¹⁰ Although the study took place from 2010-2012, I have included the current NCAA Manual. Each principle/policy shows the date it was adopted, revised, or amended. All principles/policies provided here were in place at the time of the study.

by the Association shall not exceed the cost of attendance as published by each institution. Any other financial assistance, except that received from one upon whom the student-athlete is naturally or legally dependent, shall be prohibited unless specifically authorized by the Association.

10.01.1 Honesty and Sportsmanship

Individuals employed by (or associated with) a member institution to administer, conduct or coach intercollegiate athletics and all participating student-athletes shall act with honesty and sportsmanship at all times so that intercollegiate athletics as a whole, their institutions and they, as individuals, shall represent the honor and dignity of fair play and the generally recognized high standards associated with wholesome competitive sports.

10.1 Unethical Conduct

Unethical conduct by a prospective or enrolled student-athlete or a current or former institutional staff member, which includes any individual who performs work for the institution or the athletics department even if he or she does not receive compensation for such work, may include, but is not limited to, the following: (*Revised: 1/10/90, 1/9/96, 2/22/01, 10/5/10*)

- (a) Refusal to furnish information relevant to an investigation of a possible violation of an NCAA regulation when requested to do so by the NCAA or the individual's institution;
- (b) Knowing involvement in arranging for fraudulent academic credit or false transcripts for a prospective or an enrolled student-athlete;
- (c) Knowing involvement in offering or providing a prospective or an enrolled student-athlete an improper inducement or extra benefit or improper financial aid; (*Revised: 1/9/96*)
- (d) Knowingly furnishing or knowingly influencing others to furnish the NCAA or the individual's institution false or misleading information concerning an individual's involvement in or knowledge of matters relevant to a possible violation of an NCAA regulation; (*Revised: 1/16/10*)
- (e) Receipt of benefits by an institutional staff member for facilitating or arranging a meeting between a student athlete and an agent, financial advisor or a representative of an agent or advisor (e.g., "runner"); (*Adopted: 1/9/96, Revised: 8/4/05*)
- (f) Knowing involvement in providing a banned substance or impermissible supplement to student-athletes, or knowingly providing medications to student-athletes contrary to medical licensure, commonly accepted standards of care in sports medicine practice, or state and federal law. This provision shall not apply to banned substances for which the student-athlete has received a medical exception per Bylaw 31.2.3.5; however, the substance must be provided in accordance with medical licensure, commonly accepted standards of care and state or federal law; (*Adopted: 8/4/05, Revised: 5/6/08*)
- (g) Failure to provide complete and accurate information to the NCAA, the NCAA Eligibility Center or an institution's admissions office regarding an individual's academic

record (e.g., schools attended, completion of coursework, grades and test scores);

(Adopted: 4/27/06, Revised: 10/23/07)

(h) Fraudulence or misconduct in connection with entrance or placement examinations;

(Adopted: 4/27/06)

(i) Engaging in any athletics competition under an assumed name or with intent to otherwise deceive; or *(Adopted: 4/27/06)*

(j) Failure to provide complete and accurate information to the NCAA, the NCAA Eligibility Center or the institution's athletics department regarding an individual's amateur status. *(Adopted: 1/8/07, Revised: 5/9/07)*

11.1 Conduct of Athletics Personnel

11.1.1 Responsibility for Violations of NCAA Regulations. Institutional staff members found in violation of NCAA regulations shall be subject to disciplinary or corrective action as set forth in the provisions of the NCAA enforcement procedures, whether such violations occurred at the certifying institution or during the individual's previous employment at another member institution.

11.1.1.1 Responsibility of Head Coach. An institution's head coach is presumed to be responsible for the actions of all assistant coaches and administrators who report, directly or indirectly, to the head coach. An institution's head coach shall promote an atmosphere of compliance within his or her program and shall monitor the activities of all assistant coaches and administrators involved with the program who report, directly or indirectly, to the coach. *(Adopted: 4/28/05, Revised: 10/30/12)*

12.01 General Principles

12.01.1 Eligibility for Intercollegiate Athletics. Only an amateur student-athlete is eligible for intercollegiate athletics participation in a particular sport.

12.01.2 Clear Line of Demarcation. Member institutions' athletics programs are designed to be an integral part of the educational program. The student-athlete is considered an integral part of the student body, thus maintaining a clear line of demarcation between college athletics and professional sports.

12.1.2.1.3 Educational Expenses. Educational expenses not permitted by the governing legislation of this Association (see Bylaw 15 regarding permissible financial aid to enrolled student-athletes).

12.1.2.1.3.1 Educational Expenses or Services—Prior to Collegiate Enrollment.

A prospective student-athlete may receive educational expenses or services (e.g., tuition, fees, room and board, books, tutoring, standardized test preparatory classes) prior to collegiate enrollment from any individual or entity other than an agent, professional sports team/organization, member institution or a representative of an institution's

athletics interests, provided the payment for such expenses or services is disbursed directly to the individual, organization or educational institution (e.g., high school, preparatory school) providing the educational expense or service. (*Adopted: 4/25/02 effective 8/1/02, Revised: 1/14/08*)

14.01 General Principles

14.01.1 Institutional Responsibility. An institution shall not permit a student-athlete to represent it in intercollegiate athletics competition unless the student-athlete meets all applicable eligibility requirements, and the institution has certified the student-athlete's eligibility. A violation of this bylaw in which the institution fails to certify the student-athlete's eligibility prior to allowing him or her to represent the institution in intercollegiate competition shall be considered an institutional violation per Constitution 2.8.1; however, such a violation shall not affect the student-athlete's eligibility, provided all the necessary information to certify the student-athlete's eligibility was available to the institution and the student-athlete otherwise would have been eligible for competition. (*Revised: 1/14/08*)

14.01.2 Academic Status. To be eligible to represent an institution in intercollegiate athletics competition, a student-athlete shall be enrolled in at least a minimum full-time program of studies, be in good academic standing and maintain progress toward a baccalaureate or equivalent degree. (*Revised: 5/29/08*)

14.01.2.1 Good Academic Standing. To be eligible to represent an institution in intercollegiate athletics competition, a student-athlete shall be in good academic standing as determined by the academic authorities who determine the meaning of such phrases for all students of the institution, subject to controlling legislation of the conference(s) or similar association of which the institution is a member. (*Revised: 5/29/08*)

14.01.4 Purpose of the Academic Performance Program. The central purpose of the academic performance program is to ensure that the Division I membership is dedicated to providing student-athletes with exemplary educational and intercollegiate-athletics experiences in an environment that recognizes and supports the primacy of the academic mission of its member institutions, while enhancing the ability of male and female student-athletes to earn a four-year degree. (*Adopted: 4/29/04, Revised: 7/31/13*)

14.01.5 Nature of Reward and Penalty Structure -- Academic Performance Program. The Division I membership is committed to providing higher education for a diverse body of male and female student athletes within the context of an institution's academic and admissions standards for all students through a system that rewards those institutions and teams that demonstrate commitment toward the academic progress, retention and graduation of student-athletes and penalizes those that do not. (*Adopted: 4/29/04, Revised: 7/31/13*)

14.01.6.1 Academic Progress Rate -- Disclosure. An institution shall not be eligible to enter a team or individual competitor in postseason competition (including NCAA championships and bowl games) unless it has submitted, by the applicable deadline, its academic progress rate (APR) in a form approved and administered by the Committee on Academic Performance. *(Adopted: 4/29/04, Revised: 9/14/07, 7/31/13)*

14.01.6.2 Academic Performance Census -- Disclosure.

An institution shall not be eligible to enter a team or individual competitor in postseason competition (including NCAA championships and bowl games) unless it has submitted, by the applicable deadline, its academic performance census (APC) in a form administered by the Committee on Academic Performance. *(Adopted: 4/29/04, Revised: 9/14/07, 7/31/13)*

14.01.6.3 Graduation Success Rate -- Disclosure.

An institution shall not be eligible to enter a team or individual competitor in a postseason competition (including NCAA championships and bowl games) unless it has submitted, by the applicable deadline, its graduation success rate (GSR) in a form approved and administered by the Committee on Academic Performance. *(Adopted: 4/29/04, Revised: 9/14/07, 7/31/13)*

15.02 Definitions and Applications

15.02.1 Administered By. Financial aid is administered by an institution if the institution, through its regular committee or other agency for the awarding of financial aid to students generally, makes the final determination of the student-athlete who is to receive the award and of its value.

15.02.2 Cost of Attendance. The “cost of attendance” is an amount calculated by an institutional financial aid office, using federal regulations, that includes the total cost of tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, transportation, and other expenses related to attendance at the institution. *(Adopted: 1/11/94)*

15.02.2.1 Calculation of Cost of Attendance. An institution must calculate the cost of attendance for student-athletes in accordance with the cost-of-attendance policies and procedures that are used for students in general. Accordingly, if an institution’s policy allows for students’ direct and indirect costs (e.g., tuition, fees, room and board, books, supplies, transportation, child care, cost related to a disability and miscellaneous personal expenses) to be adjusted on an individual basis from the institution’s standard cost figure, it is permissible to make the same adjustment for student-athletes, provided the adjustment is documented and is available on an equitable basis to all students with similar circumstances who request an adjustment. *(Adopted: 1/11/94)*

16.3 Academic and Other Support Services

16.3.1.1 Academic Counseling/Support Services. Member institutions shall make general academic counseling and tutoring services available to all student-athletes. Such counseling and tutoring services may be provided by the department of athletics or the institution's nonathletics student support services. In addition, an institution, conference or the NCAA may finance other academic support, career counseling or personal development services that support the success of student-athletes. *(Adopted: 1/10/91 effective 8/1/91, Revised: 4/25/02 effective 8/1/02, 5/9/06, 1/19/13 effective 8/1/13)*

16.3.1.2 Life Skills Programs. An institution shall be required to conduct a life skills program on its campus. *(Adopted: 4/27/00 effective 8/1/00, Revised: 10/7/10)*

16.11 Benefits, Gifts and Services.

16.11.1.1 General Rule. Receipt of a benefit (including otherwise prohibited extra benefits per Bylaw 16.11.2) by student-athletes, their family members or friends is not a violation of NCAA rules if it is demonstrated that the same benefit is generally available to the institution's students and their family members or friends. *(Revised: 1/19/13 effective 8/1/13)*

16.11.1.7.1 NCAA Research Studies. A student-athlete may receive compensation from the Association for participating in specified NCAA research studies. Such compensation shall be consistent with the going rate for compensation offered in studies involving nonathlete populations. **[R]** *(Adopted: 10/28/99 effective 8/1/00, Revised: 4/30/09)*

16.11.1.7.2 Institution-Based Research Studies. A student-athlete may receive compensation from an institution for participating in a research study involving only student-athletes, provided: **[R]** *(Adopted: 4/30/09)*
(a) The study is initiated and conducted by a faculty member at a member institution; and
(b) The study and compensation arrangements are approved by the institutional review board of the faculty member's institution consistent with policies applicable to other institution-based research studies.

APPENDIX C

July 14, 2010

Dion,

I want to reassure you that not only do I understand the present working terms of my commitment to the possible internship we discussed, but that I welcome them. My developing expertise is grounded in relational communication. All of the concerns you so clearly articulated will not be applicable to me. I am professional, responsible, community-oriented, driven, and 100% drama free. I was deeply motivated by both your and Ruth's vision for SAS. I am passionate about student-athletes and their role in athletics, campus communities, and society at large. Their visibility as University representatives is critical. I am committed to doing the kind of work that will encourage student-athletes to take personal and social responsibility in their positions and prepare them to be leaders on and off the field. I have come to you in hopes of securing a position in SAS that will not only benefit my professional aspirations but will enable me to serve the student-athletes, athletic department, SAS, and University. It is my hope that my presence will alleviate some of the weighty responsibility carried out by your staff in ways that will decrease stress/workload and create more time for professional and program development. I see this opportunity as a great privilege and I assure you that I am absolutely up to the challenge. The following are working expectations I have for the possible internship:

- To secure a position in SAS that will enable me to become immersed in the community and gain a comprehensive understanding of SAS in day to day operations
- To increase my understanding of the complexities of student-athlete support and how individual athletes perceive and interact with it
- To gain knowledge about how SAS interfaces with NCAA compliance
- To better understand the role of SAS staff and the challenges they face
- To better understand how contrasting identities and issues of diversity can complicate support
- Through immersion in this environment I will distinguish the various areas of literature that I will integrate into my research
- To positively contribute to the SAS community and programming
- To begin advising student-athletes
- To participate in developing student-athlete programming such as CHAMPS/Life Skills and transition programs